THE NATIONAL GUARD IN WAR: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE 27TH INFANTRY DIVISION (NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD) IN WORLD WAR II

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

THE NATIONAL GUARD IN WAR: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE 27TH INFANTRY DIVISION (NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD) IN WORLD WAR II, by Major Charles S. Kaune, USA, 173 pages.

This study is an historical analysis of the 27th Division in World War II. The performance of that division is illustrative of all divisions which were mobilized in 1940-1941 from the National Guard. The focus was on personnel, training, organization, military education of the leadership, and external influences.

A number of conclusions resulted from this study. As was the case with all National Guard divisions, the Congress denied adequate funds to equip or train them to a standard which would enable them to function in war. Once mobilization began the Army systematically disintegrated the National Guard divisions sending it's soldiers to service schools and to other newly activated divisions. The Army's theory that all soldiers were but interchangeable parts that could be inserted anywhere disregarded the major potential contribution of the National Guard. This contribution was the cohesion developed through years of close association. The senior leadership of the National Guard was a particular weakness in both tactical and technical matters and leadership.

The upshot of the study is that the post-mobilization Army failed to capitalize on the strengths of the National Guard, it's cohesion, while permitting it's gravest vulnerability, the ineptitude of the senior leadership.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The National Guard was an integral part of the foundation of the defense establishment in America prior to World War II. Along with the small Regular Army the Guard was to provide the initial force which would ensure the inviolability of the United States. However, when global war became unavoidable, and the Guard was called to serve, some questioned the effectiveness of that service.

The intent of this paper is to derive some general characterizations about National Guard productivity in World War II, and to determine the causes for that measure of productivity. To do this I examined one Guard division, the 27th, in the period 1940-1945. Whereas I do not imply that all National Guard units were equal during mobilization or on the battlefield I do believe that the similarities permit meaningful and appropriate generalization. The measure of productivity is not relevant, as such, but what is significant is the reasons that affected that productivity. Therefore, an analysis of the 27th Division and their

performance in the Central Pacific becomes the focal point of this study. In that analysis a detailed determination of the personnel make-up, the extent of training, the organizational flaws, the military education of the leadership, and the impact of external influences is necessary.

The 27th Division (New York National Guard) was typical of the era and, despite it's ignominious relationship with the Marine Corps, would serve as a useful tool for examination.

This paper is organized into seven chapters. Following the introduction is a chapter describing the events between the two world wars that are relevant to the National Guard. In order, the next chapters then deal with the reorganization and training of the 27th Division; their combat action on Makin; their participation in FORAGER (Saipan); combat on Okinawa; and conclusions detailing why their performance was as it was.

The contribution of the National Guard in World War II is a controversial subject. Many senior officers, who held positions of great responsibility, cast doubt as to the worthiness of the Guard in battle. General Omar N. Bradley said in his autobiography that he could not "continue to support the fiction that the National Guard could be relied upon for anything more than local riot control."[1] Lieutenant General Leslie J. McNair, Commander Army Ground

Forces, in a memorandum to General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, said:

> the National Guard, as organized before the war, contributed nothing to National Defense. On the other hand dependence on this component as a great part of the Initial Protective Force of our nation was a distinct threat to our safety because of the belief of our people that the National Guard could enter a war and act with combat efficiency.[2]

General Peyton March, Chief of Staff during the First World War, expressed his concern early on stating that the National Guard could not be used outside of national boundaries because of their unreliability. And General Omar Bradley again said that the "National Guard was virtually worthless in a major national crisis" and that the draftee divisions were superior to those of the Guard.[3]

How did the National Guard come to be "an expensive boondoggle" as General Bradley described it? To better understand the nature of the National Guard and it's role in the military establishment it is instructive to review it's development since the turn of the century.

The National Guard of 1900 was a direct descendant of the militias of the earliest settlers to this country. Throughout our history America's wars have been fought predominantly with armies raised upon the commencement of war. Our tradition has not been one of large standing armies rather we have relied upon volunteers and state militias.

The reliance upon volunteers and state militias assumed that the majority of the population understood and accepted their responsibilities and obligations in a free society. Adam Smith in "A Wealth of Nations" stated the obvious: "The soldiers are maintained altogether by the labor of those who are not soldiers (and) the number of the former never can exceed what the latter can maintain."[4] This attempted to put into dollars and cents terms the moral responsibility of the citizenry. The public could serve in the military themselves or they could foot the bill for the maintenance of a Regular Army, either way fulfilling their moral obligation. To maintain the free society in which we live all citizens incur an obligation to serve in some capacity the institutions which keep it free.

There have been three predominant schools of thought regarding the manner in which the United States military was to be organized. The John Calhoun theory was an expansible army in which a very small regular army would be enlarged with an influx of volunteers driven by overwhelming patriotism. The regiments would have a cadre of officers and NCOs to be filled out with volunteer enlisted men.

The exact opposite of Calhoun's theory was that of Emory Upton. Upton, a graduate of the United States Military Academy, proposed a large standing regular army which would serve to respond to all of the country's military needs. For

Upton, there was no substantive role for the National Guard other than providing for the state's needs.

Between these two extreme ends of the spectrum came Elihu Root. Root, Secretary of War under President William McKinley and Secretary of State under Theodore Roosevelt, was responsible for a number of significant achievements such as the organization of the General Staff with a Chief of Staff and the origin of the Army War College. It was also during his tenure as Secretary of War that the Dick Act (Militia Act of 1903) was passed establishing a greater role for the National Guard, i.e., as a first line reserve for the Regular Army. In an address to the National Guard Association in May, 1903 Root said, "whenever we come to fight a war, it will be fought by a volunteer army, as the war with Spain was fought. Those National Guard organizations are the great school of the volunteer to which the country must look."[5] Root, as early as 1901, was promoting for the National Guard new equipment, regular army advisors, higher military education for their officers, and money to enable them to train adequately. It was apparent to Root that there was a direct relationship between the efficacy of the Guard and the support provided them by the Federal Government.[6]

From the Dick Act in 1903 to the National Defense Act of 1920 there were a number of significant changes to the Regular Army-National Guard relationship. The National Defense Act of 1908 provided for a National Militia Board to

advise the Secretary of War on the conditions and needs of the Guard. This board was responsible for making recommendations on allowances, ammunition, inspections, and field training.[7] The war in Europe in 1916 dictated some changes in the Guard as reflected in the National Defense Act of 1916 in which the Federal Government assumed a tighter control over the Guard. The government provided drill pay for the Guardsmen and more equipment while instituting a series of inspections to raise their standard of efficiency. The first full-time training of the Guard in a Federal status occurred in 1916 with their mobilization for duty on the Mexican Border. By the end of that summer 158,664 Guardsmen had served.[8]

Following the Great War the entire military establishment underwent wholesale revision. Brigadier General John McAuley Palmer wrote the bulk of the National Defense Act of 1920 while on detail with the U.S. Congress. His concept was, for the most part, accepted and written into law. Palmer's blueprint for the military called for a small professional army which would garrison outposts and overseas bases, train the civilian reserves, and man a few divisions for initial protection during mobilization. Furthermore, there would be a citizen reserve of National Guard and Organized Reserve divisions, and universal military training.[9] The Act called for a Regular Army of 280,000 enlisted and 18,000 officers with a National Guard of

450,000. The Federal Government would retain control over the Guard through appropriations and training inspections. These would be used to fill primarily the Organized Reserve Corps but also the National Guard and to a very limited degree the Regular Army.[10]

Universal military training was not passed as a part of the 1920 National Defense Act. America's new-found abhorrence to war precluded the adoption of mandatory, peacetime military service. Should general war require full-mobilization the plan was for the Regular Army and the National Guard divisions to protect the country while the Organized Reserve Corps cadred volunteers in the new divisions. Palmer's creation was the embodiment of Root, expanded.

The National Defense Act of 1920 was the vanguard legislation directing the defense of the country until 1940. The original intent and the plan for the implementation of that intent was viable. However, the fiscal realities of the age and the rising pacifism in America never permitted it to mature. Neither the Regular Army nor the National Guard was brought to peacetime standards in personnel, equipment, or training. This left a great readiness void which would haunt it's leadership on the brink of World War II.

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[1]Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, A General's Life (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p.483.

[2]LTG Leslie J. McNair, memorandum dated 12 July 1944, subject: Recommendations on the Post-War National Guard

[3]Bradley, A General's Life, p.483.

[4]Martin Anderson ed., The Military Draft, (Stanford, Calif.: The Hoover Institution Press, 1982), p.303.

[5]Elbridge Colby, The National Guard of the United States, (Manhattan,KS: MA/AH Publishing, Co., 1977), ch II, p.24.

[6]Ibid, p.6.

[7]Ibid., ch IX, pp.3-4.

[8]Ibid., ch V, p.1.

[9]J. Garry Clifford and Samuel R. Spencer, Jr., The First Peacetime Draft, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1986), pp.36-37.

[10]Colby, ch VIII, pp.18-19 and Bennie J. Wilson ed., The Guard and Reserve in the Total Force, (Wash., DC: National Defense University Press, 1985), pp.22-23.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATIONAL GUARD BETWEEN THE WARS

The Army between the First and Second World Wars suffered from a number of problems all of which led to their pitiful state of readiness at the commencement of World War II. Treaties calling for arms limitations in 1922 and the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 dictated a United States military policy designed solely for defense.[1] These treaties came on the heels of America's incipient pacifism and rising isolationism. Churches and so-called peace societies were at the forefront of the post-Great War mania to reduce military spending and the proposed compulsory military service.[2] Colleges and universities in the 1920s, in support of this effort to promote peace, militated against the presence of military training on campus.[3] College students by the thousands took the "Oxford oath", i.e., not to bear arms in future wars.[4] The battle cry of the pacifists appeared to be: the diversion of resources to create a military juggernaut like pre-war Prussia would not make a better life

for Americans. The implied argument inherent in their position was that greater military preparedness would only retard needed social advances.[5]

Aside from the wave of pacifism and isolationism the military was hampered by the depression of the 1930s and the attendant dearth of available resources. Though recruitment was easier, the Army still suffered because they were compelled to shift assets to programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps which received more Army money than did Reserve component training.[6] All of the military, not just the reserve components, was a victim of these problems. The Army, in addition, fell victim to America's fear of a large standing force, it's preference being for a militia. The greater interests of the country were to be safeguarded by the Navy.[7]

Between 1920 and 1930 the Regular Army stood at approximately 130,000. From 1931 to 1939 the average was 164,000.[8] Despite the paucity of forces this was not the greatest among the problems of the Army. Modernization of the force with tanks, aircraft, large caliber artillery, semi-automatic rifles, and radios was unachievable and would have a greater negative impact on the Army. Army Chief of Staff, General Douglas MacArthur, in 1932, recognized the need for funds for modernization and continued to lobby towards that end. Congress, however, would continue to fund horses, mules, wagons, and harness at a greater rate than

armored vehicles until 1938.[9] Congressional penury is best illustrated by their insistence on appropriating unlimited money for the repair of old trucks while not permitting the purchase of new ones.[10] In addition, as long as stocks of ammunition for World War I vintage weapons existed there would be no appropriations for new equipment.[11] As General MacArthur stated before Congressional budget hearings in 1934 the stockage of equipment was both inadequate and obsolescent.[12] The War Department drew up a "Policy for Mechanization and Motorization" which, among other things, identified a need for the 105mm howitzer. Development of this weapon was never funded due to the lack of money.[13] Furthermore, the Army was incapable of exploiting technological gains in the civilian sector for military purposes. Research and development was an almost totally unexplored region during the period between the wars.[14]

Appropriations for the Army increased modestly between 1922 and 1932 though not of sufficient amounts to increase their effectiveness. The depression caused this trend to be reversed from 1933 to 1935. From 1936 to 1939, as tensions increased in Europe, the annual appropriations went up.[15] General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower in his autobiography stated the results of the scarcity of money:

> military appropriations during the thirties had restricted training to a unit basis. Even small arms ammunition for range firing had to be rationed in occasional doles. The Army concentrated on spit and polish, retreat formations,

> and parades because the American people, in their abhorrence of war, denied themselves a reasonable military posture.[16]

In addition to the reasons already addressed the Army between the Wars was scattered throughout the United States and abroad in postings rarely as large as regiment. This and the imposition of non-military duties such as administration of the Civilian Conservation Corps taxed the Regular Army to the point where they were incapable of performing their traditional function.

The organization of the Army in 1939 illustrates their lack of preparedness for war. There were 174,079 men in 130 posts, camps, and stations including 45,128 garrisoning Hawaii, the Philippines, and the Canal Zone. There were only three formally organized divisions each of less than half strength. There was one cavalry division at half strength and one mechanized brigade at half strength.[17] The National Guard was organized in 18 divisions and consisted of 199,491 personnel which amounted to approximately half of their wartime strength.[18] The strength of the Organized Reserve Corps was 119,733 of which only 3,000 were NCOs. About 90% of these Reserve officers were company grade and about 17% had not been participating in any kind of training.[19]

The 450,000 man National Guard called for in the National Defense Act of 1920 was never raised. The peak enrollment between 1920 and 1939 was 199,491.[20] This low

number is not a reflection on the patriotism of the American public rather it illustrates the inadequate funding of the Army. In many communities the local National Guard company survived on the donated time of the Guardsmen, i.e., even without the meager drill pay the citizen-soldiers continued to serve.[21] It was not uncommon for officers to leave their businesses and families to attend courses of instruction lasting up to three months in length.[22] The leadership of the National Guard companies were often experienced veterans of World War I. Company I, 10th Infantry (the predecessor of the 106th Infantry), New York National Guard, had as it's commander in 1932 Captain George Wilkinson. Wilkinson, a Captain in the War, was a stern disciplinarian who conducted precise drills and range firing. His First Sergeant, Harold R. Murphy, had also served as a Captain in the War. The two worked in perfect harmony with 1SG Murphy accepting his role without animosity. The 2nd platoon leader, 2Lt John M. Nichols, was a veteran of the Marine Corps in China and he reflected that training in the way in which he handled his men.[23]

Recognizing the need for greater professionalism within the Army of the United States, command post exercises between the Regular Army and the National Guard were begun in 1934 with 1st Army. These continued with one field army annually for each successive year.[24] Beginning in 1935 the field armies began conducting maneuvers with the regular

component and the Guard as a shakedown for both troops and staffs. 1st Army began the exercises in 1935 and six National Guard divisions participated: the 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 43rd, and 44th. There were 58,000 soldiers participating in these Army maneuvers which equates to 9,600 per division, less than half it's authorized strength.[25] In 1936, 2nd Army conducted maneuvers with: the 32nd, 33rd, 37th, and 38th divisions. In 1937, 4th Army was responsible for the exercise and it controlled the following divisions: 34th, 35th, 40th, and 41st. The 3rd Army conducted the maneuvers in 1938 with: the 30th, 31st, 36th, and 45th divisions. The cycle repeated itself in 1939 with the 1st Army again hosting the exercise with the same divisions as in 1935.[26]

Despite the successful appearance of these large field army maneuvers their lack of utility was apparent to the Regular Army hierarchy. There were too few officers skilled in the staffing and commanding of units as large as battalions. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General George C. Marshall, alerted his staff to this problem so that they might find a solution. In a letter to Lieutenant Colonel Omar N. Bradley, Marshall stated:

> A serious weakness of the National Guard is the lack of trained staffs from battalion up, meaning staff teams that know how to function expeditiously and to the advantage of the troops This staff weakness will be destructive of troop efficiency unless it is thoroughly understood as a weakness and everybody works to meet it.[27]

The National Guard, similarly, was emasculated by the lack of modern equipment and training that was only rudimentary at best. By and large the Guard armories were centers of community activities such as dances and festivals. The units stressed organized athletics, shooting competitions, and parades to raise morale, unit esprit, and for recruiting.[28] The Guard was an army of amateurs in which the officers were attempting to learn their trade without proper guidance while the enlisted men were being trained without the proper equipment.[29] Weekly drills of one and a half hours each was barely long enough to form the unit, inspect, and perform cursory functions. Training usually conducted during these brief periods was: close order and extended order drill; guard duty; first aid; disassembly of the Browning Automatic Rifle and assembly while blindfolded; small arms instruction; and general military knowledge.[30] Prior to the annual summer training an intense train-up was conducted to prepare the soldiers. Instruction conducted by the non-commissioned officers of Company I, 10th Infantry consisted of: making the bedroll; tent pitching; care and cleaning of equipment; scouting and patrolling; small unit tactics; interior guard duty; and rifle marksmanship.[31]

The two weeks in the summer, training with obsolescent equipment, was valuable for developing unit cohesion but didn't prepare for modern warfare.[32] The 27th Division's infantry usually trained at Camp Smith, New York while the

artillery trained at Pine Camp. They conducted joint training at Pine Camp in 1927 and 1935; at Plattsburg in 1939; and at Dekalb in 1940.[33] Typical of the training at summer camp was that experienced by Company I, 10th Infantry at Camp Smith, Peekskill, New York. The company would move from Mohawk by rail to Red Hook and then hike to camp which was one mile away. This march typically exhausted the troops who were carrying their rifles and packs. Company I, as all of the companies of the regiment, was billeted in squad tents pitched over concrete bases. There was a latrine at one end and a kitchen at the other end of the company street. Each evening the regiment would conduct evening parade and retreat with the troops dressed in their class A uniform complete with white leggings and waist belt with brass buckle. The regimental band performed for each of the evening parades.

During the first week of camp the company would practise on a 200 meter known distance range with the .30 caliber, Springfield rifle. Other range work included a fire and movement exercise for a platoon on a 600 meter range which was designed to train fire control and distribution. One overnight tactical problem would be conducted which consisted of a six mile forced march, the pitching of tents, and then an exercise such as the platoon in the attack. The exercise invariably would be conducted in daylight and was followed by a critique, the striking of tents, and then another forced march back to the main camp. During inclement

weather training usually consisted of mess hall lectures. The forced march to the train at red Hook at the end of camp would not result in the same exhaustion of the troops experienced at the beginning.[34]

As war began to loom ever closer in Europe the War Department began to press for improvements to the force. Their immediate needs were, in 1938, an increase of 58,000 in the ground force, 36,000 in the National Guard, and the purchase of sufficient equipment to outfit the Protective Mobilization Plan's M-day force of 730,000 plus the M-Day plus five months force of 270,000.[35] To clarify these needs Chief of Staff, General Marshall, reported to the Senate Military Affairs Committee that both the Regular Army and the National Guard needed the following pieces of modern equipment: new artillery, a semi-automatic rifle, and enough anti-tank and air defense ammunition to train the force.[36]

Due partially to Germany's 1 September 1939 attack of Poland training in the National Guard was accelerated. Annual drills increased from 48 to 60 and field training from 15 to 22 days. President Roosevelt signed an executive order authorizing an increase in the Army on 8 September.[37] The alternating cycle of field army maneuvers changed so that all participated in an exercise in 1940.[38] The summer maneuvers of 1940, which occurred prior to the Federalization of the Guard, had 90,000 troops of the Regular Army and National

Guard exercising in the 1st Army area. The square National Guard divisions (two brigades each with two regiments of three battalions each) averaged 10,414 personnel or roughly half of their authorization of 22,000.[39]

The typical Guard division in those maneuvers had no light or heavy mortars, no new anti-tank weapons, one quarter of it's requirement of new rifles, stove pipes as cannons, and commercial trucks simulating tanks. The deficiencies noted by the Regular Army inspectors included a lack of discipline, leadership, liaison, sanitation, and improper communications and supply procedures.[40] For too long the Regular Army had conducted ineffectual training at echelons below regiment with obsolescent equipment or none at all. This lack of professionalism was handed down to the National Guard.

As the war in Europe intensified America's Protective Mobilization Plan received the ultimate test. General Malin Craig, Army Chief of Staff from 1935 to 1939, initiated the PMP as a means to rapidly expand the military forces in conjunction with the attendant industrial base.[41] Essentially, the PMP called for the activation of the National Guard which, with the Regular Army, would provide a force capable of defending the country during full scale mobilization. Over the course of mobilization, 4 million men would be called in 390 days.[42]

However, the protracted peace from the end of the Great War until President Roosevelt signed the Selective

Service and Training Act of 16 September 1940 meant to war planners that there was no industrial base upon which to prepare for global or even limited war. The dearth of research and development funds not appropriated during the years of peace would mean that the Army would require a massive injection to modernize the force to current European standards.

Notwithstanding the shortage of modern weapons the Army felt that their peacetime organization was adequate to deal with any minor emergency without disrupting civilian operations. The Army was organized into nine corps areas each with one Regular Army division, two National Guard divisions, and the nucleus of three Organized Reserve Corps divisions. The boundaries of these corps areas were established to equalize the available population for service.[43] PMP planners estimated that the Regular Army would number 280,000 after 60 days of mobilization and would be used as an expeditionary force. The National Guard would constitute a 435,000 man second echelon and the Organized Reserve Corps would be a cadre for the training of the millions of wartime conscripts.[44] The Regular Army, however, being spread across the United States and abroad, found no opportunity for large unit training. The Organized Reserve Corps was but a collection of some 100,000 officers, and no NCOs, who would form the cadre for draftee divisions, and who had no opportunity to train in divisions. The

National Guard was their sole participant in division size exercises between the Wars.

General Marshall, recognizing the need for a concerted effort to train up the existing Army establishment for war, founded the General Headquarters using as a model the AEF HQ of WW I. Brigadier General Leslie J. McNair established this organization on 26 July 1940 in the buildings of the Army War College, Washington, DC. His main effort was to plan the training of the individual soldier and oversee the preparation of squads through armies. Marshall first had to rid the Army of it's arcane intermediate level bureaucracy also known as the Chiefs of Field Artillery, Infantry, Cavalry, and Coast Artillery. Exercising unlimited power in training and equipping their particular arm they had become a hindrance to the expeditious and efficient development of the Army as a whole.[43] With their elimination McNair was then free to develop and implement a training plan without unnecessary interference.

McNair's position as chief trainer of the Army would put him at the right hand of the Chief of Staff. The preparation of the Army for war was the nation's most critical need in 1940. As General Eisenhower noted in Crusade in Europe, regarding training in the Army, "the mass of officers and men lacked any sense of urgency. Athletics, recreation, and entertainment took precedence in most units over serious training."[44] Supporting Eisenhower's comments

were the severe criticisms of the Corps maneuvers of 1940. Despite the weaknesses these exercises demonstrated the ability of the Army to coordinate and move large masses of troops for the first time since 1918.[47]

A major impediment to the rapid formulation of trained divisions was the need to maintain large body for hemisphere defense. General Marshall regarded the threat to America and South America to be very real. For this reason he didn't break up the Regular Army regiments to cadre a large number of new emerging divisions.[48] What Marshall and the Army would rely on in this emergency was the National Guard. As General Marshall said in a radio broadcast on 16 September 1940,

> *For years the National Guard has been preparing for service in the event of a great national emergency. Today that emergency is recognized...they must establish themselves in camp and in the shortest possible time season and prepare their small nucleus of men--about thirty per cent of full strength-to receive and train triple their number.*[49]

General Marshall's speech coincided with the President's signing of the Selective Service and Training Act, the first peacetime conscription law in United States history, a tacit confirmation of the country's imminent involvement in the war in Europe. One month after the signing there were 16,000,000 men registered for military service though the Act limited annual inductions to 900,000 and appropriations could only support 800,000.[50]

The language of the Act required all men aged 21 to 35 to register and serve for a training and service period of 12

consecutive months and then in one of the reserve forces for 10 years or until age 45.[91] If Congress declared an emergency, however, the President could extend the period of service indefinitely.[92] Sufficient time, however, had not been allocated to build and staff replacement training centers, therefore, the first increments of draftees and volunteers, through December 1940, were sent directly to the activated divisions for initial combat training.[93] During this period many of the new draftees and volunteers would be integrated into the understrength National Guard and Regular Army divisions. Many others would fill the Reserve divisions which had been staffed by officers of the Organized Reserve Corps, National Guard, and Regular Army, and NCOs from the Guard and Regular Army.

General Marshall was concerned that the quality of the divisions be as equal as was humanly possible to ensure maximum flexibility for employment. He realized that the Regular Army officer was the most ready for combat due to his training and education and, therefore, care should be used in assigning their limited numbers (16,624 in 1940).[94] The policy regarding National Guard officers, the next most abundant and qualified, was they should be retained in their positions and that vacancies would be filled by promoting or appointing personnel from that same unit. Further amplification of that policy came from General Marshall in a letter to his Army commanders on 23 October 1941:

> In considering the capabilities of a National Guard officer to command a National Guard

> unit, it is not believed that we should compare him with the best available Regular Army officer. Rather, we should consider, in my opinion, whether or not the National Guard officer is capable of discharging the duties of the position in a creditable manner.[95]

The paucity of funds available in the lean years between the wars meant that none of the National Guard divisions had a full complement of people. The average strength was around 10,000 or roughly half the authorized total for war. The Guard divisions upon reporting to their training sites found they were to be cut even more as they would have to provide the cadre for at least one of the Organized Reserve divisions.[96] Marshall had wanted to bring all of the National Guard divisions on active duty at the same time to speed up the process of forming the Army. He realized that the training of the Guard units was rudimentary, in many cases, but at least they were organized and could accept vast numbers of recruits and begin the initial orientation of civilians thus reducing some training time in the future.[97]

Marshall, having been an instructor with the National Guard during his career, knew better than most in the Regular Army community the challenge ahead of them and this he tried to pass on to his subordinate commanders:

> it will tax the wisdom of leaders of all ranks to mold these citizen-soldiers into a unified Army prepared to accept cheerfully the rigors of long hours of training, the fatigue of marches, and the discomforts and hardships of services in the field...In

> accomplishing the foregoing there must be no pampering of individuals, no distinction between men because of their previous military experience or condition of entry into the service.[56]

Despite the need for a large number of officers for the ever-growing Army there was a reluctance to capriciously award commissions, to approve promotions without justification, or to revoke commissions of apparently unqualified officers. The hierarchy of the Army had to weigh the needs of the service as to the quality and quantity of it's officers. To assist him in the process of weeding out Guard and Reserve officers who were either too old to perform or for other reasons, General Marshall established an advisory board made up of distinguished former officers of the Reserve components. The board would act on cases in which a Reserve component officer was removed from a position for a variety of reasons. In one instance a Guard Brigadier General was relieved of command by his commanding general and this action was supported by the Army commander and the War Department General Staff. The Board, however, intervened and advised that the officer be reassigned other duties rather than discharged from the service.[57]

In an other instance Governor Sam Jones of Louisiana, a National Guard captain, was recommended by his state adjutant for promotion to the grade of major although he had failed to complete the necessary courses and though there were no vacancies. The War Department General Staff supported the promotion recommendation but the Executive for

Reserve and ROTC Affairs refused to endorse it saying the promotion was the result of political patronage. General Marshall, understanding the long term benefits of such a promotion in conjunction with the prospective position on a larger staff which Governor Jones would hold, ruled in his favor.[40] Marshall understood full well the relationship between the higher ranking officers of the National Guard and well placed government officials. He moved quickly but carefully to remove National Guard officers at division and regimental level who had many years before exceeded their wartime usefulness. When members of Congress would attempt to intervene on behalf of one of their cronies General Marshall would cut them off with a response such as this:

> I'll put it this way, gentlemen. I don't understand your position because I think that your principal interest--and here it seems to me that you are only considering one constituent and ignoring all your other constituents who are members of the division. I am concerned with them.[41]

In refining the Army, Marshall and the War Department General Staff found that there were more Regular Army officers to be removed from the active list than National Guard or Reserve. From June to November 1941, 195 Regular officers were removed; 31 Colonels, 117 LTCs; 31 Majors; and 16 Captains. Among the National Guard and the Reserve there were 269 removed: six Colonels; eight LTCs; 60 Captains; 84 1Lts; and 97 2 Lts. Also, 33 National Guard officers were reclassified and 74 resigned. Of the Regular Army removals,

this was 1.3% of the total and of the National Guard and Reserve this was only .75%.[42]

General Marshall was probably the biggest supporter of the National Guard during this time period. His belief was that they lacked experience and not leadership ability. In a memo to LTG Drum on 26 April 1941 General Marshall said: "I have gone through a National Guard division and questioned practically every 2Lt in the artillery, and rarely have even found a man who has fired a gun more than once."[43] Therefore, they should be given every opportunity to prove that they were as efficient as the Regular Army officer.[44] As General Marshall stated to the Secretary of War in a letter dated 30 September 1941, of the approximately 25,000 National Guard officers only 6,800 had ever completed a service school course of instruction.[45]

Officer vacancies in the Guard units prior to 1 February 1942 were filled with Organized Reserve Corps personnel and to Guard soldiers with commissions or those newly appointed.[46] After 1 February, all components of the service now being consolidated in the Army of the United States, all officers were in competition against one another for promotion.

In accordance with the precepts of the Selective Service and Training Act Lieutenant General Hugh Drum, Commanding 2nd Corps, on 9 October 1940 ordered the 27th Division (New York National Guard) to concentrate at Ft

McClellan, Alabama. The division began the move by train and wheel convoy on 17 October 1940 and the last unit closed on 26 October.[47] The division had approximately 10,000 soldiers on the rolls and would need 7,000 to rise to mobilization strength. Details were immediately sent to Ft Dix, New Jersey, Camp Upton, New York, and Ft Niagara, New York to begin the reception of recruits arriving on 21 January 1941. Major General William N. Haskell, CG of the division since 1926, established a training regiment to facilitate the initial combat training of the 7,000 recruits and who would later be added to the established regiments of the division.[48]

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CHAPTER 3

REORGANIZATION AND TRAINING

The execution of the Selective Service and Training Act of 16 September 1940 was initiated with the induction of four National Guard divisions. All of the Guard divisions were inducted for a one year period of service incrementally over the course of the fiscal year. The last of the divisions was inducted on 5 March 1941 and by October there were 300,034 Guardsmen on active duty.[1]

The National Guard in New York was more than just the 27th Division. The 87th Infantry Brigade, consisting of the 71st and 174th Infantry Regiments, and the 69th Field Artillery Brigade's 156th Field Artillery Regiment were all based in New York City but an integral part of the 44th Division (New Jersey National Guard). The 51st Cavalry Brigade, consisting of the 101st and 121st Cav Regiments, and the 212th, 244th, and 245th Coast Artillery, were all elements of the GHQ Reserve based in New York City. The 258th Field Artillery Regiment and the 101st Signal

Battalion, subordinate units of the 2nd Corps, were also New York National Guard elements. Additionally, there was the 93rd Infantry Brigade, consisting of the 10th, 14th, 165th, and 369th (Black) Infantry Regiments, which was unassigned prior to mobilization.

The 27th Division consisted of four infantry regiments organized into two brigades, an artillery brigade, an engineer regiment, a medical regiment, a quartermaster regiment, and special troops. The 53rd Infantry Brigade had the 105th and 106th Infantry Regiments while the 54th had the 107th and 108th. This was the same organization with which they went to war in 1917. Prior to induction into Federal Service, the division underwent some fundamental organizational changes. On the 20th of June 1940, the 165th Infantry Regiment was assigned to the division and carried as excess. The 107th Infantry Regiment was reorganized on the 1st of August 1940 as the 207th Coast Artillery (anti-aircraft) to help allay the public's fear of attack from European aircraft. On 1 September the 106th Infantry was reorganized as the 186th Field Artillery and the 101st Military Police Battalion. The unassigned 14th Infantry was reorganized into the 187th Field Artillery Regiment on 16 September. On the 15th of October, upon mobilization, the 10th Infantry was redesignated the 106th Infantry Regiment and assigned to be the fourth regiment in the division. Therefore at the time the division was sent to Ft McClellan

in 1940 the 53rd Brigade had the 105th and 106th nee 10th while the 54th had the 108th and 165th.

The impact that these organizational changes had upon the combat efficiency of the division is questionable. The effect that they had on the personnel of the regiments was probably devastating as they were steeped in tradition. The redesignation of the 107th Infantry Regiment tolled the death knell of the fabled silk stocking regiment which had been first organized in 1806. One story of the 107th, probably apocryphal, was that the soldiers of the regiment arrived at the 1st Army maneuvers in 1935, at Pine Camp, in taxi cabs with their individual strikers. Thus they earned the name the "taxi-cab army".[2] The retention of the 165th Infantry, which had fought as a charter member of the 42nd Division in World War I, meant that the traditions and heraldry of the the Old 69th New York Regiment would continue.

The goals of MG Haskell were to build a good, basically trained division; make Ft McClellan a better place to live and train; conduct specialist training to replace pre-induction losses; and bring the division up to war-time strength.[3] The Army of the United States, by necessity, called the Guard to active duty in increments because of inadequate facilities. Existing military camps were insufficient for the large influx of soldiers, there were too few uniforms of the appropriate sizes, and not enough weapons and equipment.[4] Ft McClellan, for example, had been the

home of one Regular Army regiment and, therefore, there were not enough billets or training areas for a division. Upon arrival the 27th's engineers along with civilian labor began the construction of billets on main post as well as rifle ranges. The regiments of the division encamped on the fringes of main post in squad tents pitched on wooden platforms. A temporary wooden mess hall was erected at the end of each company street with a latrine at the opposite end. These facilities were occupied for approximately one month before moving into more permanent structures on main post.[3]

The initial period of training for the Guard divisions, upon induction, typically concentrated on the basic training of draftees and volunteers. The 27th Division had 10,389 original Guardsmen when inducted and supplemented this figure with 6927 new recruits. The first thirteen weeks, therefore, saw the division eschew higher unit training for the indoctrination and integration of the new men.[4] The officers and non-commissioned officers were also developing their tactical and leadership skills during this time period. General George Marshall in a national radio address given at the time of the signing of the Selective Service and Training Act, foretold the unpleasantries attendant to military service:

> This means long hours of arduous work. For the officers and non-commissioned officers it means not only hard physical work but also intensive daily study of the manuals covering

> the latest technique in warfare. It is only through discomfort and fatigue that progress can be made toward the triumph of mind and muscles over the softness of the life to which we have become accustomed. All this not only takes time, but requires wholehearted effort. It demands a standard of discipline which will prevail over fatigue, hunger, confusion, or disaster.[7]

Toward this end, many officers were sent off to service schools to become proficient in their trade while the company's non-commissioned officers conducted basic training. For the infantry, the basic course of instruction lasted from thirteen to seventeen weeks and the advanced course lasted thirteen weeks.[8] As was the case with the rest of the Army of the United States, the 27th Division's officers lacked a fundamental knowledge of modern tactics and weapons employment.

To more efficiently indoctrinate the new recruits each company of each regiment of the division organized a cadre of older soldiers to oversee their training. Company I, 106th Infantry Regiment, was typical in their approach to training. 1Lt Donald Diaz, one of the older platoon leaders, became the "Training Company" commander with Sergeant Joe Lopaski as his First Sergeant. Platoon sergeants and squad leaders, likewise from the parent company, conducted all training from a schedule made up by Lt Diaz the day prior. Each day the training company, made up of 75 recruits and the cadre, would march two and one-half miles from the encampment to the local training area. The initial program of

instruction included all of the following: close order drill; extended order formations; physical training; tent pitching; assembling the pack; and bayonet drill. As the recruits progressed in their development as soldiers their training turned to: the route march; formation and conduct of the advance guard; the approach march; conduct of the infantry scout; small unit tactics (although no up to date manual existed); classes of fire; fire distribution and fire control. Practical exercises were conducted for the conduct of the defense and the attack in which fire and movement was emphasized. During this basic training phase the recruits were taught preparatory rifle marksmanship, the caliber .30 light machine gun, and the 60mm mortar. Each day ended with the Training Company being marched into the encampment, at attention, while the regimental band played stirring martial music. [9]

The basic training concluded on 3 February 1941 and all training companies were integrated into their parent units. At this time VII Corps conducted an inspection to determine the relative readiness of the division and to recommend the beginning of the next phase of training. Thus certified by Corps the division began a thirteen week advanced training period which would last until May 1941. During this period selected officers continued to be sent to service schools, individual soldiers were sent to specialist courses, and the units conducted tactical problems.[10] The

division maximized the opportunity for multi-echelon training through NCO conducted individual instruction while much of the senior leadership was away at service schools.

At the time the 27th Division began training at Ft McClellan there were only a handful of officers who had attended the Army's preeminent institution for war, the Command and General Staff School: the Commanding General of the 52nd FA Bde, BG Ralph McT. Pennell; Colonel Hampton Anderson, the Chief of Staff; Colonel Brendan Burns, the Commander, 102nd Engineer Regt; Major Bittmann Barth, Commander, Special Troops; and Colonel Christopher Degenaar, Commander, 105th Infantry Regt. During the interwar years there was typically only one National Guard officer per regular year long class. In addition there was a special National Guard and Reserve Course conducted each year. The few Guard attendees of the CGSS was due partially to the lack of money available to the army but primarily to the time taken out of the individual's civilian career. Typically, Guardsmen who could afford the time were independent businessmen such as lawyers.

On 1 November 1939 the War Department curtailed the regular course from one year to four months and increased the size of National Guard and reserve participation to approximately 100. The course was further reduced so that by 2 December 1940 it was only nine weeks long. The make-up of

that first course was 31 Regular Army, 55 National Guard, and 11 Organized Reserve Corps.

The change in the course design in conjunction with a reduction in the number of officers assigned to the school as instructors caused the student to instructor ratio to increase from 1:5 to 1:10. This course change dictated that much of the instruction be conducted in the lecture mode in large halls with limited student participation. The number of hours for application of instruction, however, was three times that for lecture. While applicatory work consumed 243 hours and lecture 75 hours, the effects were illusory because the students would work in large, open, hangar-like buildings with but a few instructors to assist and critique. The new abbreviated course began to teach on-going changes in the Army such as the move from the square to the triangular division. More attention was paid to writing and disseminating orders, situation maps, staff journals, records, and reports. By 1941 the Command and General Staff School was graduating 1260 students a year to fill the ever expanding numbers of General Staff Corps requirements.[11]

The 27th benefited by the increase in allocations and in 1941 sent the G3, G4, Adjutant General, three officers from the 106th Infantry Regt, and one officer from the 53rd Infantry Brigade. The division was in a transition period in which they held onto some old tradition by sending older experienced officers yet they also sent some of the younger,

up-and-coming officers who had more of a future ahead of them.

At the beginning of the advanced training Company I underwent some significant changes: CPT Oscar E. Schultz and First Sergeant Harold R. Murphy, the last remaining World War I veterans, were transferred out and replaced by younger men, CPT Charles J. White and First Sergeant Joe Lopaski.[12] Also significant was the introduction of the M1 Garand, semi-automatic rifle to the division. The older Guardsmen had been training with the Springfield, 1903 model, caliber .30 rifle as had the new recruits. There were enough M1s for one regiment; therefore instruction in preparatory marksmanship and record firing was done by echelon. The introduction of the M1 signified an end to war when individual riflemen would select individual targets at ranges of 800 meters. Now the emphasis would be on enhanced firepower at 400 meters.[13]

The induction and initial training of the National Guard units was an orderly and well planned process. General Leslie McNair's General Headquarters had established a four phase training regimen which would ensure efficient development of the AUS divisions. Each phase incorporated tests, unit training with frequent reviews, free maneuvers, immediate critiques, integration of the tactical units, stress on the responsibilities of commanding officers, and an emphasis on battle realism.[14] McNair's insistence on free

play did away with the scenario driven, canned exercises of the pre-emergency Army. Umpires were introduced to stimulate thought at each echelon. For example: the umpires would penalize a maneuver unit 1% for each minute they remained in the impact area of artillery; and, they would lose 3% for every tank that got within 100 yards.[15]

The 27th Division, having completed their advanced training, underwent the 2nd Army maneuvers as a part of VII Corps from 24 May until 27 June 1941. It was during these exercises that the divisions were to implement General McNair's GHQ directives for the conduct of a free maneuver exercise.[16] The value of these large exercises has been extolled over the years by the ranking participants, however, the troops at the lowest level remain unconvinced as to the value of them. Retired First Lieutenant Fred Kaune, then a squad leader in Company I, 106th Infantry Regiment, stated "operations orders, if used at all, did not reach points below a certain rank or grade levels". Furthermore, "maneuvers, for the most part, seemed to be one long and continuous troop movement with occasional rest area stops for a day or two." [17] General Dwight D. Eisenhower, speaking of these maneuvers after the war, was convinced that they were invaluable in preparing the Army for war. He stated that "the beneficial results of that great maneuver were incalcuable. It accustomed the troops to mass teamwork; [and] it speeded up the process of eliminating the

unfit."[18] Generals McNair and Walter Kreuger, regarding deficiencies of the participating National Guard units, said that the officers and enlisted men were soft and undisciplined. Also, the troops were essentially road bound, unable to adequately conduct reconnaissance, incapable of coordinating with adjacent and supporting units, and leadership was a grave weakness.[19]

The division reassembled after the Tennessee Maneuvers at Fort McClellan on 10 July and prepared for the upcoming Louisiana-Arkansas Maneuvers. On 29 July the 27th moved out as a part of LTG Ben Lear's 2nd Army against LTG Walter Kreuger's 3rd Army.[20]

"These maneuvers were, as far as the company was concerned, about the same as the Tennessee Maneuvers, i.e., long, hot marches to unknown destinations."[21] General Eisenhower, on the other hand, believed that the maneuvers were necessary and filled a great need. "Not one of our officers on the active list," he said after the war, "had commanded a unit as large as a division in the First World War."[22] The maneuvers were a vast laboratory where new tactics, equipment, and soldiers were all integrated to form an effective fighting force. 400,000 soldiers from the 2nd and 3rd Armies maneuvered across the wide open spaces of Louisiana and Arkansas, testing combined arms doctrine and the fast, decisive employment of mechanized and tank forces.[23]

General Kreuger made some very general observations about the maneuvers, that road discipline and dispersal were disregarded. General McNair was more outspoken saying "that many of the weaknesses developed in these maneuvers are repeated again and again for lack of discipline."[24] Prior to the Tennessee Maneuvers unit commanders concentrated on combat training fundamentals and tactics at the company and below. During the Tennessee and the Louisiana-Arkansas Maneuvers the focus was at division and corps. Many senior officers were taking note of the serious deficiencies of some of their junior officers. Major General George Strong, CG VIII Corps, stated that "poor leadership asserted by many officers" was their most notable contribution during the exercises.[25] Evidence of this *poor* leadership was manifest in the absence of any measure of morale. The editors of LIFE magazine had a reporter interview 400 privates in five National Guard regiments (27th Division) after participating in the Tennessee maneuvers. The upshot of those interviews was that 50% of the Army would desert in October once their period of service was over. The reasons given for deserting were a disbelief that there was an actual national emergency, dissatisfaction with the officers, arcane training methods, lack of equipment, absence of recreational equipment, and an unfavorable comparison of their position with their civilian counterparts. On artillery pieces and latrine walls across the country the word OHIO was found meaning Over The Hill in

October, i.e., a wave of desertions would follow the end of the 12-month period of service.[24]

It is clear that the value of these large scale maneuvers depended on the level of the interpreter. The Army, recently mobilized and undergoing tremendous growing pains, needed training of all types and at all echelons of command. The Army, Corps, and Division staffs all received invaluable training at the conduct of war at their level. The staffs of the Guard divisions were all inexperienced and mostly undereducated, at least in military circles, and certainly new to the complex world of general war. Mobilization had caused existing staffs in Guard divisions to operate in the stress of an ever changing environment. Officer changes occurred almost daily with the integration of Organized Reserve officers and the removal of older Guard officers. This turmoil necessitated the constant and continual training of the large organization staffs.

The effectivenes of this kind of training at the individual soldier, squad, platoon, and company level was minimal at best. The army was just not very efficient at conducting multi-echelon training which was needed in this time of short preparation and almost immediate probable employment overseas. The blame can be laid on the emerging leadership of the divisions who could not foresee the opportunity for training at the lowest levels but also on the company grade leadership who should have been capable of

taking advantage of the time available. Criticism of this leadership cannot be too harsh as the void was created by the paucity of Regular Army guidance and instruction during the pre-war years.

During the respite between the two large maneuvers President Roosevelt and the War Department succeeded, narrowly, in passing an extension of the Selective Service and Training Act. On 21 July Roosevelt stated that a grave national risk would be involved if legislation wasn't forthcoming to make it possible to retain on active duty the vast numbers of soldiers currently serving. The Selective Service and Training Act of 1940 had obligated volunteers, draftees, and National Guardsmen for a period of one year which, for many, would end in October of 1941. The Service Extension Act of 1941 authorized the President to stretch out to 18 months the enlistments, appointments, and commissions of those personnel who were inducted under the 1940 Act.[27]

The immediate result of the Service Extension Act was a noticeable deterioration in soldier morale especially in the National Guard. There were a number of contributing factors for this low morale: worry over the civilian jobs they left behind and their families welfare; a lack of belief in the national emergency declared by the President; homesickness; and the lack of morals and professionalism among the officers over them.

Hilton Howell Railey, a member of the editorial staff of the New York Times, was directed to investigate the morale of the Army in the summer of 1941, following the publishing of the LIFE article (18 August 1941) which stated essentially that there was precious little. Mr. Railey served in the Army in The First World War and, therefore, had a foundation for his assertions regarding morale and professionalism in the Army. Mr. Railey's observations as they pertain to the National Guard are as follows: fraternization between officers and enlisted men was flagrant and disgraceful; officers were in physical fear of their men; the government has violated their contract for one years service; and the soldiers have no faith in their lieutenants and captains and no respect for their qualifications.[28] Major General James E. Edmonds, Commanding General of Ft Lee, Virginia in August 1941, told Mr. Railey that the "system" is to blame for inadequately prepared officers. Funds were never available to "develop through actual field experience, the necessary psychology of command, or even a proper sense of responsibility to their men--in housing, food, administration, etc."[29]

About five days after returning from the maneuvers the War Department authorized the release of all men over the age of 28; those whose service was creating hardship at home; and members of the AUS whose one year term of service had expired. These men were transferred to the Enlisted Reserve

Corps or to the Inactive National Guard.[30] This wholesale release cost the 27th 3000 men and dropped the unit's strength to 13,384 enlisted and 920 officers. There were also some major changes in the division's leadership: MG Haskell, aged 63, was reassigned to become the National Director of Civil Defense and replaced by BG Ralph McT. Pennell, 59 year old commander of the 52d Field Artillery Brigade. Distinguished Graduate of the Army's Command and General Staff School in 1923, BG Pennell also graduated from the Army War College in 1928. 46 year old Colonel Redmond F. Kernan, Jr., commander of the 104th Field Artillery Regiment replaced Pennell as the 52d Artillery Brigade commander.[31]

The 1942 Report of the National Guard Bureau stated that there were only 4 trucks, 1 motorcycle, 14 sub-machineguns, 360 shotguns, 1 radio, 252 gas masks, and 11,522 Springfield rifles with which to outfit the entire division. Regarding personnel, there were 11 Regular Army officers, 776 Guard officers, and 137 Organized Reserve officers. Among the enlisted there were 10 Regular Army, 7902 Guard, and 5705 draftees.[32] The artillery was equipped with obsolescent 75mm towed pieces and the infantry was burdened with the useless 37mm anti-tank gun. More than any other reason, the dearth of modern equipment limited the effectiveness of the Army maneuvers.

The release of men over 28 and those with hardships at home cost Company I of the 106th the First Sergeant, three

out of four platoon sergeants, the supply sergeant, and the regimental officer's mess sergeant. This significant loss of leadership was typical throughout the division. Although the non-commissioned officer's corps in the division was steeped in tradition and founded in tactical proficiency there was only a thin layer of this expertise. The first layer was skimmed off when the division formed at Fort McClellan and the older and more experienced soldiers were sent to higher headquarters staffs. The second layer came off when the over-28 cut was executed. The replacements for the second layer, for the most part, came from within each company and this would form the last of the old Guard soldiers. NCO replacements henceforth would come from the draftees and volunteers whose sole military experience was the Tennessee-Louisiana-Arkansas Maneuvers. The division as a whole requisitioned 5693 infantry, 1067 artillery, 346 engineer, 353 medic, 289 quartermaster, and 114 miscellaneous branch replacements immediately after Pearl Harbor was attacked.[33] In January 1942 3200 replacements were sent from Camp Wolters, Texas, the first from outside of the state. The division was transferred to California as a result of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and took part in the defense of the west coast. Upon arrival at Fort Ord, California, they received new M1 rifles or carbines, new clothing, and new artillery pieces.[34] Also during this period more of the senior leadership was replaced. COL Chris

Degenaar, 51 year old commander of the 105th Infantry Regiment was replaced by his 2nd Battalion commander LTC Leonard A. Bishop. COL Thomas Dedell, the 59 year old commander of the 106th Infantry Regiment was replaced by 50 year old COL Russell Ayers, an Organized Reserve Corps officer.[33] The division would only spend a few weeks garrisoning California prior to shipping out to the Territory of Hawaii.

The lead elements of the 27th embarked from San Francisco, California on 28 February 1942 with the preponderance of the division arriving 10 days later, although there were still some pieces of units landing as late as mid-April.[34] The regiments and brigades were outposted to the outer islands to defend them from attack. On the island of Oahu the Hawaiian Division, forerunner of the 24th and 25th Divisions, would provide the defense. The 27th would remain so outposted until late October.[37]

Activity on the outer islands amounted to manning beach defenses for approximately six weeks and then rotating to a reserve role for 3 weeks. The emphasis was on physical conditioning and small unit tactical training.[38]

For Company I of the 106th the stay in the outer islands was as uneventful as the Army Maneuvers of 1941. Bayonet instruction and close order drill were given to the sugar cane plantation workers where the company was billeted. As martial law was in effect, a security patrol

would move through and around the local village at night to ensure the blackout wasn't violated. The possibility of Japanese invasion never diminished while Company I was on Hawaii and only tended to wear thin the nerves of the young, inexperienced soldiers. At some point a young soldier fired at a buoy thinking it was a Japanese miniature submarine. The ricochetting rounds into adjacent friendly positions caused even more firing resulting in the alerting and moving of the company into fighting positions on the beach.[39] When the Japanese fleet further threatened the US in the Pacific in June 1942 and reports of imminent invasion were received Company I deployed to the beach on South Point and dug-in with relish. Double-apron barbed wire was strung along the beach, foxholes and communications trenches were dug, and machineguns and mortars were registered along the final protective line.[40] The troops continued to improve their positions and made cleaning their weapons a religion in this salt air environment. The Japanese, of course, were waylaid by the Navy at the Battle of Midway and, therefore, Company I of the 106th didn't see action.

In January and February 1942 the National Guard divisions were required to triangularize as the Regular Army had done in 1941.[41] The 27th was ordered in July to triangularize by 31 August 1942. The result of this reorganization was the loss of the 108th Infantry Regiment to the 40th Division and the complete restructuring of the 52d

Field Artillery Brigade. The three Brigade Headquarters were disbanded and their personnel assigned elsewhere. BG Alexander Anderson, one of the legitimate heroes of The Great War, and CG of the 54th Infantry Bde, was slated to command the 86th Infantry Division, however, he suffered a fatal heart attack en route. BG Ogden J. Ross, former Commanding General of the 53rd Brigade became the division's Assistant Division Commander. BG Redmond Kernan, CG of the 52d FA Bde became the DIVARTY Commander. The 52d FA Bde, originally three regiments of six artillery battalions, was reduced to four battalions: the 104th, 105th, 106th, and 249th FA Bns. [42] The immediate effect of the reorganization was the sudden availability of a number of officers for reassignment. Several of the key staff officers on the 53rd Infantry Bde staff rose to positions of prominence on the division staff, notably Captain William Van Antwerp, the Bde intelligence officer. He rose to LTC and G2 of the division. However, some officers became excess in grade and were forced out of the division, most notably LTC Joseph McDonough, executive officer of the 54th Infantry Bde. He was one of the handfull to graduate from the Command and General Staff School and because there was no position available, he was transferred.

All of the divisions of the AUS were undergoing the turmoil of reorganization that goes with an expanding army. The ever increasing numbers of soldiers created out of

draftees and volunteers at the 21 replacement centers meant more divisions for war. To fill these divisions with qualified officers and NCOs the existing units were called upon to provide a cadre.[43] Typically, a qualified division would be authorized an over-strength in grade for the specialty requirements for the cadre. The division would continue to train with these additional numbers until such time as they were called to fulfill their cadre function, usually 2-3 months after the over-strength authorization. The selected division commander and his principal staff officers would attend the division officers course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The other officers would attend appropriate courses at their service schools.[44] A natural tendency was for the existing divisions to flood the cadres with the derelict or otherwise unwanted soldiers of the command. To stem this the division headquarters would require the submission of the names of the enlisted members of the cadre and only later require the names of the officers. Theoretically this kept the officers honest since they might end up on the cadre themselves.[45]

Although the 27th never formally provided a cadre for another division they did fill many key NCO positions from their ranks for the 10th Infantry Division (Mountain). In addition, in July 1942, most of the senior NCOs, including all of the 106th Infantry's first sergeants, were sent to the Army's Officer Candidate School. This was the third layer of

NCOs skinned from the 27th Division leaving a minimum of experienced sergeants.[46]

On the 20th of October 1942 the 25th Infantry Division was deployed to Guadalcanal. To fill out their ranks to the authorized strength the 27th was compelled to provide 3500 replacements. The 27th then moved to establish the defense of Oahu while the 40th Division assumed responsibility for the defense of the outer islands.[47]

The 59 year old commanding general of the division, Major General Ralph Pennell, requested relief due to age and was reassigned to command the Army's Field Artillery School. His replacement, Major General Ralph Smith, a graduate of the Army's Command and General Staff School and a Regular Army officer, assumed command on 20 November 1942. The Chief of Staff also changed at this time as Colonel John Haskell, son of the former commanding general, was reassigned to the War Department General Staff. He was replaced by 42 year old Colonel Albert K. Stebbins a 1924 graduate of the US Military Academy and a Command and General Staff School graduate.[48] In September the division received 2500 new soldiers from the replacement training centers to partially fill the vacancy created by the 25th Division levy.

During September and October the division underwent a strenuous training regimen in preparation for a short notice deployment to combat in the Pacific. All soldiers familiarized with all weapons organic to their unit and

qualified with their individual weapon. Combat veterans from Guadalcanal were imported to conduct realistic training to demonstrate the battle-tested methods for fighting the Japanese.[47] In October all of the units rotated through the amphibious training centers at Makua and Waianae. Here they conducted maneuver and live fire exercises, assaulted pillboxes with demolitions, attacked with tanks, and adjusted live artillery fire.[50] Also during this intensive retraining period staff officers and first sergeants were preparing manifests and shipping lists in preparation for deployment. The infirm were weeded out leaving but a shadow of the original division as it was when mobilized in October 1940, two years earlier.[51]

During the division's occupation of the Hawaiian Islands key officers were selected for and sent to the Command and General Staff School. Between June and August 1943 the 27th had four graduates and no failures of the course: the Assistant G2, S2 165th Infantry, and the S3s of the 105th and 106th Infantry Regiments. In December 1942, while the individual units of the division continued their intense tactical training, two officers attended the Marine Corps' amphibious school in San Diego, California. Upon return they established an Army amphibious school in Hawaii which operated between 7 April and 12 May 1943. The purpose of this school was to indoctrinate regimental and battalion staff officers and commanders with Navy-Marine-Army

amphibious warfare procedures.[52] Each of the infantry battalion landing teams then were assembled at Schofield Barracks, Oahu, to conduct the intricate art of amphibious warfare. The men were instructed in the use of cargo nets, ropes, boat team drill, debarking, deployment from mock-up boats, and passage through wire entanglements and other obstacles. The battalion staffs prepared boat assignment tables, boat diagrams, shore party organizations, landing diagrams, debarkation and approach schedules.[53]

The training of the 27th Division was in preparation for employment against the Japanese in the Central Pacific. The strategy of the United States was to conduct a two pronged assault on the Japanese with the main effort coming in the Central Pacific under Admiral Nimitz and a secondary or supporting effort by General MacArthur in the Southwest Pacific.[54] A third theater was operational in Burma with the US Army under General Joseph Stilwell subordinate to the British. In all three regions the driving factor was to get close enough to strategically bomb the Japanese islands.[55] The intent of Nimitz' Central Pacific campaign plan was to take the Japanese Navy and it's carrier based air power out of the region. By neutralizing the Japanese Navy Nimitz would execute an economic strangulation on the Japanese homeland. If this did not force surrender then the long range bombardment of Japan from those Pacific Islands seized would.[56] MacArthur's aim in the Southwest Pacific was

oriented more on his promise to return to the Philippines. Initially his was a defensive campaign brought about by the Japanese threatening Australia by way of New Guinea. All of MacArthur's efforts were focused on the eventual reinvasion of the Philippine Islands.[97]

General George C. Marshall alone dictated the priorities. The lack of unity of effort and the division of resources directly impacted on the 27th Division. The Southwest Pacific, under MacArthur, became an Army dominated theater. The Central Pacific, under Admiral Nimitz, was a Navy dominated theater. The Marine Corps was the principal ground force for the Navy in their theater. However, the Corps lacked sufficient forces to accommodate Nimitz' grand strategy and, therefore, the Army was compelled to augment them with infantry divisions. This complex operational approach to war in the Pacific caused the 27th Division to be employed under the tactical control of the Marine Corps rather than under an Army commander.

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CHAPTER 4

MAKIN

The 27th Infantry Division in the Fall of 1943 could hardly be called a National Guard division. As was the case with all of the other Guard divisions, the preponderance of soldiers were either volunteers or recent draftees. Of the original 10,000 plus Guardsmen who were activated with the division in the Fall of 1940, there were probably fewer than 6,000 remaining. Most of the senior leadership was still intact however. All of the regimental and battalion commanders save for the commander, 106th Infantry, was a New York National Guardsmen. Colonel Russell Ayers, the only outsider, was an Organized Reserve Corps officer. Of the division staff only the G3, RA LTC Dayton L. Robinson and Colonel Stebbins the Chief of Staff, were not Guardsmen.

Operation GALVANIC, which had been in planning for almost a year, would introduce ground combat forces into the Central Pacific for the first time in the war. V Amphibious Corps was established as the ground force headquarters for this invasion of the Gilberts. The 2nd Marine Division and the 27th Infantry Division were assigned during the planning and training phases of this operation.[1] The Marine Division would invade the larger objective, Tarawa, while the Army division would assault Makin. For the Makin operation MG Ralph Smith chose the 165th Infantry Regiment as the base unit to which he added the 3rd Battalion, 105th Infantry, 105th Artillery Battalion, and the non-divisional 193rd Tank Battalion.[2] This regimental combat team was commanded by 54 year old Colonel W. Gardiner Conroy, a long time Guardsman who began his career as an enlisted man before World War I. He had served off and on with the Guard as an infantryman and as a Judge Advocate General's Corps lawyer and with the Organized Reserve Corps. He reentered the Guard in 1939 as an infantry colonel and soon thereafter became the commander of the "Old 69th New York", later changed to the 165th Infantry. The 165th Infantry was not highly regarded by the Commanding General of V Amphibious Corps, MG Holland M. Smith:

> I took the 165th Regiment (reinforced) for employment at Makin. It was the best in the division but prior to departure it was reported that MPs had been mauled in an incipient riot over at the 27th Division's camp. This...plus the fact that the Army

> troops were not so well trained as the Marines in amphibious warfare, did not make the 27th an ideal division, but since Makin was only feebly defended, a reinforced regiment should take it easily.[3]

The 165th embarked for Makin with only one of the battalion commanders who had overseen training at Fort McClellan and through the Army maneuvers of 1941. LTC Gerard Kelley, 40 year old West Point graduate of the class of 1925, commanded the first battalion at Makin. A member of the New York National Guard since 1931, at Fort McClellan he had been the division Adjutant General. He had replaced another West Point graduate, Major John Grombach, and he was the only senior officer in the regiment to graduate from the Army's Command and General Staff School (Special Course, 1941). The second battalion was commanded by 37 year old LTC John McDonough a replacement for LTC Louis Doan. He had been the regimental S2 during the Army maneuvers. 42 year old LTC Joseph T. Hart commanded the third battalion throughout Fort McClellan, the Army maneuvers, and at Makin. LTC's Hart and McDonough had attended the Infantry School's Battalion Commanders and Staff Officers Course and were both long time veterans of the New York National Guard.[4]

Some of the 165th's quality company commanders were pulled out to fill critical shortages elsewhere in the division. Winslow Cornett, silver star recipient in World War I and commander of Company D, 165th at Fort McClellan, became the commander of the first battalion, 106th Infantry

Regiment. And, Henry F. Ross, former commander of Company M, 165th, became the division G3 and later executive officer of the 106th Infantry Regiment. Another significant loss to the regiment was that of decorated World Wart I veteran LTC Martin Meaney, the executive officer. The 55 year old Meaney was promoted to Colonel in early 1942 and took command of the 108th Infantry Regiment.[5]

Since mobilization in October of 1940 the division had undergone massive personnel changes in all ranks. Of the 6,000 Guardsmen that had gone to Hawaii in 1942 there were fewer than 3,000 remaining in the Fall of 1943. Of those 3,000 the majority were privates or junior NCOs. The preponderance of the original first sergeants and platoon sergeants had been excused because of age or hardship at home, or had been selected for OCS or as the cadre for another division. The 165th reflected the same turmoil in personnel and had an expected shortfall in experienced NCOs.

The 27th Division had been conducting training in anticipation of employment in the Pacific Theater since their arrival in the Hawaiian Islands. Beach landing and jungle fighting had been their primary training emphasis for 18 months. With combat now imminent specialized training became intensified. Jungle woodcraft, lore, and tropical hygiene were integrated into the combat training program. All of the combat troops familiarized and qualified with their unit's organic weapons and threw live hand grenades. The artillery

and tanks fired all of their weapons on ranges designed for that purpose. Tactical problems were conducted from squad through regimental combat team and addressed the following situations: daylight attack in close terrain; hasty and prepared defenses of a position; night operations; perimeter defense; day and night withdrawal; the attack of fortified positions in jungle terrain; and the elimination of snipers.[6] Although the tanks, infantry, and artillery participated in regimental exercises they never achieved an adequate level of cooperation due, essentially, to incompatible communications systems and techniques. The employment of individual tanks or platoons of tanks in concert with infantry platoons and companies was not attempted.[7]

The 165th Regimental Combat Team conducted amphibious training on the beaches of Hawaii, Waimanalo, Kahuku Point, and at the Pali Region in anticipation of a contested amphibious assault. They all participated in loading and unloading on the simulated Navy transport (a wooden pier) at the Waianae Amphibious Training Center believing the Navy-Marine Corps dogma that the most difficult phase of the operation would be the movement to and over the shore.[8]

Organization for the Makin Operation, code named GALVANIC, had Admiral Raymond Spruance commanding the entire operation but with Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner commanding Task Force 54, the operational arm of the invasion

of Makin and Tarawa. Admiral Turner would also command Task Force 52, the Northern Attack Force consisting of the 165th Regimental Combat Team and divisional support elements. Task Force 53, the Southern Task Force was commanded by Rear Admiral H.W. Hill and consisted of the 2nd Marine Division. Major General Holland M. Smith, the Commanding General of V Amphibious Corps, commanded the expeditionary forces and acted as the ground force advisor to Admiral Turner.[9]

GALVANIC wasn't the first operation against Makin Atoll. On 17 August 1942, LTC Evans Carlson led the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion in a submarine launched assault against the main island, Butaritari. This raid, an effort to determine the strength of the Japanese forces in the Central Pacific and to demonstrate the resolve of the American fighting man in the early part of the war, accomplished it's missions. The results of the raid were inconsequential to the 27th Division but the Raider executive officer, Major James Roosevelt, provided insights into the nature of the terrain on Makin that were used by the intelligence staff of the 27th Division prior to GALVANIC and he accompanied them as an observer. [10]

The Japanese responded to the Carlson raid by reinforcing the Gilberts with troops from the Marshalls, the Carolines, and from Japan.[11] On 15 February 1943 the Yokosuka 6th Special Naval Landing Force was redesignated the 3rd Special Base Force and elements were sent to Makin and

Apamama from Tarawa. The Japanese, along with hundreds of impressed Korean laborers, prepared concrete and log emplacements for guns, transmitting and receiving stations, tank barricades and traps, underwater obstacles and dugouts for machine guns and riflemen.[12]

Makin Atoll is triangular in shape enclosing a large lagoon. The main islands of the atoll are Butaritari and Kuma and together are 13 miles long and average 500 yards in width. Kuma Island lies to the northeast of Butaritari and is separated by a reef three-quarters of a mile in length. At low water this reef can be crossed on foot, but at high water it is six to eight feet deep with strong cross currents. Butaritari Island, the principal objective of GALVANIC, is shaped like a crutch with the armrest on the west side and the leg of the crutch pointing to the east-northeast. There is one village, Ukiangong, located on the southwestern edge of the island and four wharves along the northern shore of the lagoon.[13] The western third of the island is covered with dense sand brush and coconut trees, the latter in great numbers. The center of the island contains extensive swamp lands and during rainy periods and at high tide it is impassable. The eastern third of the island has some swamp land though not impenetrable and coconut trees though in fewer numbers than in the west.[14]

In the ten months that the Japanese, and their Korean laborers, had been on Butaritari they had built two extensive

barriers extending across the island. The barriers consisted of a large trench reinforced with double-apron barbed wire and trip wires and a log anti-tank barricade. There were numerous gun emplacements and rifle pits with a few concrete pillboxes. There were some 3.8 centimeter coastal defense guns in addition to machine gun pits and anti-tank positions along the western shore. The 2800 yards between the two tank barriers was termed the "Citadel" and was the most strongly defended area on the island. [16]

According to the division's operation's overlay the strength of the enemy was concentrated along the western shore in four strongpoints and between the two tank barriers ("Citadel"). The G2's intelligence analysis reported that the enemy likely would defend along his beach positions with air support and then fight a delaying action to the east toward Kuma Island.[14] The actual numbers of enemy personnel was 798 consisting of personnel of the 3rd Special Base Force, air personnel, men of the 111th Construction unit, and men of the 4th Fleet Construction Department detachment. This force was under the command of Lt (JG) Seizo Ishikawa.[17]

The division shipped out on five transports. Each of the APAs carried, in addition to the Battalion Landing Teams with attachments, the necessary landing craft to enable the units to move from the larger transports to the shore. Each of the BLTs was task organized to enable them to accomplish

their mission. Each had attached a medical collection platoon, a platoon of engineers, a platoon of tanks, and an additional rifle company from the 105th Infantry.[16] Aside from the five transports there were three LSTs and an LSD. The LSTs carried the assault wave in LVT 2s, more commonly known as Alligators. The Alligators were tracked vehicles, armed with .30 and .50 caliber machine guns, and rockets, and which could move through the water, across reefs, and on land with reasonable speed. Personnel from the 193rd Tank Battalion had been specially trained in the handling of the Alligators and they became the crews for these assault vehicles. The assault wave itself was an ad hoc organization drawn from the 105th Infantry Regiment. Three detachments were established and designated Detachment "X" 105th Infantry, Detachment "Y" 105th Infantry, and Detachment "Z" 105th Infantry. Each of the detachments contained eleven officers and approximately 130 enlisted men.[17]

The 27th Division's plan for invading and subjugating Makin Atoll was simple and concise. The Navy would prepare the island with intense gunfire support and then provide air protection for the landing craft as they moved to shore. The 165th RCT would land at H-hour with two BLTs abreast, the right (BLT-3: 3rd Bn, 165th) on Beach Red 2 and the left (BLT-1: 1st Bn, 165th) on Beach Red and advance to the division beach head line with the main effort in the south. Initially the 2nd Battalion, 165th (BLT-2) would be the

division reserve and then at W-hour land at Beach Yellow 2. BLT-1 would then relieve BLT-3 of their portion of the beach head line and push on to meet BLT-2. At this time BLT-3 would become division reserve. The RCT would consolidate and press on to the east end of the island reducing enemy resistance as it was encountered.[20]

The assault was to begin at both Tarawa and at Makin at 0830 hour 20 November 1943. At Makin the attack began at 0617 hours with an intense air and naval gunfire preparation of the landing areas.[21] At 0829 hours the Alligators landed and the special detachments moved inland against occasional sniper fire. At 0840 hours the landing craft of BLT-3 began to land and would continue until all 1250 men were ashore at 1022 hours.[22]

Detachment "Y", debarking from the Alligators, cleared the immediate beach and then moved off to the north clearing the area to FLINK Point. BLT-1, assembled quickly and then advanced to the beach head line, 1300 yards to the east against occasional and inaccurate sniper fire. The tanks attached to BLT-1 were of no use as they refused the commands of the infantry officers. In addition the terrain, marsh, extensive debris, shell holes, and shallow lakes, made it impossible for the heavier tracked vehicles to provide any support.[23] Natives interrogated by the men of BLT-1 stated that there were approximately 400 Japanese soldiers and 450 workmen on the island.[24]

BLT-3 encountered no opposition to their landing or in advancing to the beach head line. Although there were several suspected enemy strongpoints in their sector they all proved to be unoccupied. Detachment "X" and Company L, 165th cleared the southern half of the sector including Ukiangong Village while Company K continued to the east. At 1055 hours BLT-3 was relieved by BLT-1, assembled north of Ukiangong Village, and remained there for 36 hours as a reserve for Tarawa.[20]

On the north side of the island BTL-2 began an opposed landing on Beach Yellow 2. Detachment "Z", 105th Infantry, led the assault in Alligators and were closely followed by LCVPs and LCMs, the latter carrying the medium tanks of Company A, 193rd Tank Battalion. The assault force crossed the line of departure at 1012 hours under intense naval gunfire support. LTC S.L.A. Marshall reported that the men of BLT-2 approached the assault landing in "a gay and confident mood. Many were inattentive to the tumult, some even slept." Landing at 1041 hours Detachment "Z" incurred five killed and 12 wounded in securing the flanks for the follow-on infantry. The Alligators containing the assault wave was able, due to their tracks, to maneuver over the reef and onto the shore. The landing craft bearing the infantry and tanks, however, had to unload their passengers at the reef. This meant that both then had approximately 250 yards of water at varying depths to traverse under enemy fire.

Radios, flamethrowers, bazookas, machine guns, and other important equipment was lost during the unanticipated move to shore. Some of the tanks were lost in hidden shell holes, including the company commander, and others to enemy fire.[26]

BLT-2 moved rapidly across the island reaching the south shore at 1210 hours. Company G, near the lagoon, advanced to the west toward the west tank barrier with Company F on the right and five medium tanks of A/193 Tank Battalion in support. The 1st platoon, along with five medium tanks, met heavy enemy resistance on the southern end of the west tank barrier, yet were able to defeat that force. In the center of the barrier 3rd platoon, Company F, suffered eight killed and six wounded as they attacked an entrenched position supported by an underground shelter. Captain Wayne Sikes led some of his tanks in an aggressive assault which, though inspiring, failed to carry the position. Hand grenades were thrown in and thrown back; the firing mechanism on the flamethrower failed; and 75mm armor-piercing shells from the tanks were ineffective. Finally, an engineer squad under 1Lt Thomas Palliser, C/102d Engineers, destroyed the bunker with demolitions. As LTC S.L.A. Marshall described the action: "working together, one tank, two infantrymen with BARs, and four engineers reduced the position by setting off the TNT in the entrance."[27] Company G at the northern end of the west tank barrier was

also making progress clearing out the enemy. They developed a technique at reducing enemy positions which was to prove 100% successful: the squad would crawl forward using the available cover; the BAR man and his assistant would cover the entrance with direct fire; two other men would rush forward throwing hand grenades in the pit and through any apertures; once the grenades exploded the BAR man and his assistant would rush the position and bayonet any surviving, Netherlander enemy; the other four men of the squad would lay back in a position to support by fire.[28]

The 3rd platoon of Company G, with a platoon of three tanks, advanced on the northern most end of the 165th's attack against a series of formidable machine gun and anti-tank emplacements. The infantry were able to subdue the machine gun positions but the AT strongpoint was another story. Pinned down by the fire of enemy machine guns 3rd platoon leader, SSG Michael Thompson, called forward the three tanks. Due to a misunderstanding the tanks, buttoned up, drove past the enemy emplacement and continued to the other side of the tank barrier where they linked up with friendly tanks which had advanced from the east. Unable to communicate with the tanks SSG Thompson rushed and jumped into the bunker, grabbed an unmanned Japanese machine gun, and moved along the connecting communications trench, clearing it of enemy. 3rd platoon made contact with BLT-1 at 1600 hours while Company F linked up with BLT-1's B Company

at 1500 hours. The center of the barrier was finally subdued by frontal assaults and 75mm fire by 1650 hours. By 1755 hours solid contact between the two BLTs was established along the west tank barrier.[27]

From the east BLT-1 advanced toward the west tank barrier with the 1st platoon, C/102nd Engineers. The sum total of activity encountered was in the form of snipers who took a toll in casualties. With Company B on the right and Company C on the left they moved towards BLT-2 with whom they had no communications. The Japanese snipers typically operated in groups of three with one man in a tree and the other two in ground level bushes close by. Because of the intrepidity of the Japanese snipers and the danger of friendly fire from the converging units BLT-1 moved cautiously and sent patrols well ahead of their main bodies. The light tanks of Company C, 193rd Tank Battalion didn't accompany the infantry due to the difficulty of the terrain thus denying them a critical asset. Company C met the stiffest resistance in the attack against the west tank barrier. An enemy machine gun position protected by numerous snipers dominated the northern approach to the barrier approximately 250 yards west of the barrier. Squads and individual riflemen of Company C made countless assaults against the position only to be denied every time. The 165th's Chaplain, Father Meany rushed forward to aid some wounded and he too became a casualty. Other soldiers seeing

the chaplain fall came forward only to add themselves to the casualty list.

Colonel Conroy, the regimental commander, came forward with a platoon of light tanks after having conferred with BLT-1 commander LTC Kelley. At 1455 hours he was shot dead by the enemy machine gun and LTC Kelley assumed command of the RCT with the executive officer, Major James H. Mahoney assuming command of BLT-1. The tanks subsequently retired for fear of hitting Company G, BLT-2 advancing from the east. The regiment's Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I & R) platoon attacked the enemy position unsuccessfully but their attack enabled the 2nd and 3rd platoons of Company C to pass around and continue to the barrier where they eliminated the remaining enemy resistance.[30]

Company E, upon landing at Beach Yellow 2, had advanced inland to the east to establish a blocking position thus protecting BLT-2's rear. Detachment "Z", 105th, was also part of this force which, originally was to have been commanded by Maj Dennis Claire, executive officer of the battalion, but who was detained off shore. In advancing across the island this force incurred numerous casualties from snipers but the preponderance to friendly naval gunfire (three killed and four wounded).[31] The most difficult fighting of the day occurred here in the center of the island against a strongly built and well camouflaged Japanese anti-tank and machine gun emplacement consisting of a

tankette supported by several rifle pits and a machine gun. Thirty five yards to the east was a concrete pillbox and another machine gun connected by a tunnel. The tunnel was highly camouflaged and contained several burrow holes permitting the enemy to squirm in and out. The tunnel was, in reality, a reinforced air raid shelter capable of withstanding the direct hit of large aerial bombs.[32]

The third platoon of Company E was engaged with the enemy at this position for four hours. One squad, of three men, managed to maneuver to the tunnel where they were attacked by Japanese soldiers using bayonets from the burrow holes. Two of the men were killed and one badly slashed before the supporting fire of the platoon allowed him to disengage. With artillery sealing off the position from the east Sergeant Hoyl Mersereau led a seven man squad around to attack from the east. Light tanks fired their 37mm in support as engineers placed TNT blocks at identified tunnel entrances. The Japanese made desperate sorties, according to LTC Marshall, charging with bayonets only to be cut down with rifle fire.[33] E Company lost eight men killed or wounded in the day's action. Total casualties for the division for 20 November was 25 killed and 62 wounded seriously enough to be evacuated.[34]

The RCT consolidated and reorganized and would in remain in position until initiating the attack in the morning. The division had accomplished their objectives

for the day, that is, the reduction of the west tank barrier, the establishment of two secure shores, artillery ashore and firing in support, and all command posts established ashore except for division's.[35]

Not everyone was satisfied with he progress of the division. MG Holland Smith, commanding general of V Amphibious Corps, said, "I was very dissatisfied with the regiment's lack of offensive spirit; it was probably not the fault of the men. The 165th was not too well officered."[36] Smith believed that the regiment was essentially a man's social club or a fraternal organization designed to promote the peacetime well being of it's members. The officers, he said, in the New York National Guard come from the old 7th New York, the "silk-stocking regiment", with an "unimpeachable reputation for annual balls, banquets, and ship-shape summer camps."[37]

The night of 20 November saw the bypassed Japanese forces attempt to break out to the east to join the remainder of their forces. One ten man group was engaged and killed by small arms fire and grenades. Sniper fire continued throughout the night disrupting the much needed rest of the forward deployed infantrymen. There was also too much indiscriminate firing by the troops at tree and bushes adding to the tension.[38]

Company C reduced the enemy strongpoint through vigorous infantry assaults by 1030 hours. There was great

confusion as landing craft arriving at Beach Yellow 2 fired into the area as did Company A. The squad conducting the assault against the strongpoint feared the friendly fire more than the Japanese. Apparently, the bulk of the enemy in the pocket had withdrawn during the night and had either gotten through or were killed by BLT-1's security personnel.[39]

The 165th was scheduled to attack at 0700 hours. However, the attached tanks were out of fuel. Therefore, the Commander 2nd Battalion deferred it until 1100 hours. While fuel was being off loaded onto the beach carrier based aircraft were bombing and strafing the area in front of the 165th. This continued from 0843 til 1100 hours at which time 2nd battalion kicked off the attack.[40] The infantry and tanks advanced slowly under sporadic and inaccurate sniper fire. One company first sergeant declared the snipers to be more of a nuisance than an obstacle and as long as the soldiers used the available cover there were few casualties. As the battalion closed to approximately 300 yards from the east tank barrier, in the vicinity of the road emanating from King's Wharf, they met the stiffest resistance of the day. The enemy, from rifle pits and trenches, poured steady fire into the 2nd Battalion. Each position was reinforced with coconut logs and well camouflaged making it extremely difficult for the infantry to eliminate. The battalion quickly learned an effective technique to reduce the enemy positions through the coordinated use of tanks, infantry, and

engineers with demolitions. Infantry would point out enemy positions to the tanks which would then fire their cannon point-blank into it or drive over it to crush the occupants. Another variation was for the infantrymen to crawl forward under the covering fire of tanks and machine guns and place demolitions near the entrances to the emplacements. The infantry was so effective in this situation because of the lack of enemy mortar and artillery fire.[41]

The worst of the enemy resistance had been overcome by 1400 hours. The remainder of the day until nightfall was spent advancing cautiously in deference to the limited accuracy of the sniper. The total casualties for D+1, 21 November, was 18 killed and 15 wounded seriously enough to be evacuated.[42]

At 1705 hours Major General Ralph Smith issued the attack orders to LTC John McDonough, executive officer of the 165 RCT for the regiment to continue the attack in the morning. There was a measure of apprehension for the 165 as they prepared for the night, therefore, they assiduously cleared fields of fire, strung wire with tin cans for early warning, and improvised cough medicine. The men were instructed to use hand grenades against suspected enemy as rifle fire tended to receive return fire. There was much less activity on this night but it was the constant threat that kept the wary American soldiers tense.[43] MG Holland Smith was, as usual, irritated that the conquest of Makin

wasn't moving at a faster rate. Admiral Kelly Turner, overall commander of the operation, insisted that Smith remain at Makin although a more important clash was on-going at Tarawa involving a division of his Marines.[44]

The 3rd Battalion departed their assembly area at 0600 hours on the 22nd, en route to the east tank barrier where they would pass through the 2nd Battalion and continue the attack to the east. As they passed through the area near Beach Yellow 2 they picked up engineer and tank assets. At 0700 hours the 105th Field Artillery Battalion commenced their preparation of the east tank barrier. This was lifted at 0820 hours and the infantry-tank teams of the 3rd Battalion started forward, with Company K on the right and Company I on the left. The attached tanks reduced suspected enemy strongpoints with their main guns with infantry clearing the remaining rubble with grenades and bayonets. The battalion moved forward cautiously protecting against the ever present snipers.[45]

At 1100 hours, Captain Lawrence O'Brien, commander of Company A, 165th Infantry, embarked with two of his platoons, a heavy machine gun platoon, and a light machine gun section in six LVTs (Alligators). Their destination and mission was to seal off the retreat of the enemy at a point 3000 meters east of the furthest advance of 3rd Battalion. They landed unopposed, established their blocking position, and, at 1314 hours, killed or captured 45 of the enemy while sustaining no

casualties.[46]

The 3rd Battalion stopped their advance on 1645 hours to enable the companies to properly prepare a defensive position. The day's operation had cost six dead and 17 wounded while the Japanese lost 100 killed and 99 prisoners.[47] Only 5,000 yards from the east end of the island the battalion established their defense across a narrow 500 yard strip. Company I occupied a position on the north, alongside the lagoon. Tied in with them on the south was Company K. To their west was Company L which stretched the entire length of the island. Firmly believing that no enemy remained on the island the men of 3rd Battalion built a weak perimeter. Dead tired and having left their entrenching tools at the line of departure, the infantrymen scratched out fighting positions with their hands and put up cursory barriers with available coconut logs.[48]

The enemy began to infiltrate and otherwise attempt to penetrate the defense at 2000 hours. The attack wasn't the coordinated effort of a tactical unit rather it appeared to be the efforts of individuals fulfilling their oath to the emperor to kill as many of the Americans as they could before dying. The ensuing fighting was a melee of barefooted Japanese attacking with knives and their bare hands. Snipers were active and much of the assault was in the form of grenade throwing although Colonel Kelley had reported mortar and heavy machine gun fire. LTC Marshall reported that the

sounds of clinking glasses and drunken gaiety could be heard as the Japanese soldiers were, apparently, bolstering their courage with Sake. As dawn approached the sporadic fighting ceased with three Americans dead and 25 wounded. The 3rd Battalion counted 51 dead enemy soldiers in front of and amongst their positions.[49]

At 0715 hours on the 23rd of November, 3rd Battalion began the push to clear the remainder of the island. Company I led the movement with 16 medium tanks and 5 light tanks attached. Company K on the left and Company L on the right formed a skirmish line behind Company I. By 1030 the battalion had reached the farthest extremity of the island having encountered numerous snipers.[50]

On the last day of the operation, 23 November, the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, Liscombe Bay, was sunk by a Japanese submarine. That loss cost the Navy 750 officers and men, including a Rear Admiral.[51] The 27th Division suffered 66 killed and 130 seriously wounded and the Japanese had 550 casualties and 105 prisoners. Major General H.M. Smith was not pleased with the performance of the division:

> The Army troops were infuriatingly slow. Butaritari, the objective island, should have been secured by dusk on D-day. Any marine regiment would have done it in that time. At Eniwetok the 22d Marine Regiment...captured Engebi, a far stronger island than Makin, in seven hours.[52]

Notwithstanding General Smith's harsh words the Commanding General, Pacific Ocean Areas, LTG Robert C. Richardson, sent

the following message on the 24th of November: "Warm congratulations to gallant officers and men of your command. A wonderful job well done. Sad by losses of our brave men."[83]

The seizure of the Gilbert Islands was but the first step in Admiral Nimitz' Central Pacific offensive campaign. The capture of Makin, Tarawa, and Apamama were strategically important to the American push because they provided a base of operations for assaults against the Marshall Islands. This success helped to shorten the lines-of-communication between Hawaii and Australia and further threatened the Japanese' outer perimeter defense.[84] Furthermore, the successful invasions of Makin and Tarawa strengthened the resolve of the American public as there had been little to cheer about heretofore. Major General H.M. Smith saw the success as being contradictory, however: "We captured Makin and Tarawa. The people of America were shocked by the slaughter on the beaches and stirred by the heroism of the Marines. Makin was an easy job, with few casualties."[85]

Despite his deprecatory remarks the successful accomplishment of the division's mission was cause for celebration but not necessarily glee. Everyone, including the Commanding General, identified errors of omission and commission and were bent on eradicating them.

In a report written after GALVANIC (Makin), Major General Ralph Smith stated, in essence, that despite the

apparent shortcomings of his subordinate units the tactics and techniques prescribed in U.S. Army doctrine were sound and effective. He noted the sometimes lackadaisical attitude of the 27th's fighting man but believed that this was characteristic of the American soldier as a whole and not indicative solely of his men. The fighting spirit was the key to successful ground combat and this could only be taught in training to a limited extent.[96]

Regarding the nature of combat in the Pacific General Smith stated what was obvious to the participants: "Few of these Æbombproof and splinterproof emplacementsA were damaged by either air attack or naval fire, and the defenders had to be blasted out with grenades, pole charges, bangalores, and...flamethrowers." This may account for the deliberate and cautious approach which the 27th took to reduce the Japanese defenses on Makin. Certainly every battle in the Central Pacific after this required the same type of activity to root the enemy out of his well prepared positions.[97]

The cooperation between tanks and infantry was not satisfactory in General Ralph Smith's estimation. One of the biggest reasons for this was the incompatible radios. The tanks were outfitted with one type and the infantry battalion headquarters another and they didn't interface. The radios of the division's cavalry reconnaissance troop were compatible and, therefore, teams were attached to the battalions to provide the communications link. However, the

coordination for employment of tanks is necessarily done at a lower echelon than battalion, typically at company or platoon. In the dense jungles of the Central Pacific, such as Makin, close cooperation between one or two tanks and a squad or platoon of infantry was the hallmark of success. Training prior to Makin had concentrated on the infantry-artillery team to the neglect of the tank and this shortcoming would have to be overcome.[96]

A conspicuous deficiency noted in the after action report was the movement techniques of the individual rifleman. Advancing under direct and indirect fire, observed or random, was an acquired skill that too few of the 27th's soldiers had mastered. Therefore, the judgement that the use of cover and advance by "creeping and crawling" would have to be stressed in training. Another deficiency attributable to the soldier's first combat experience was their propensity for firing their individual and crew served weapon without proper target identification. This lack of fire discipline was more noticeable at night when the tension of battle combined with the uncertainty of night to exert unanticipated stress on the men. General Smith recognized the tendency as a danger to individual soldiers who might get caught in the errant fire and also to the unit whose position was identified by the enemy and attacked. The solution to this series of problems was to conduct more training at night to lessen the soldiers fear of that phenomenon.[97]

Major General Smith recognized some of the problems he was to incur by virtue of working in a joint endeavor, i.e., subordinate to a Marine who answered to a Navy admiral. In the after action report he summed it up thusly:

> There are many conflicting elements involved in the execution of an amphibious operation. The Naval Commander is concerned primarily with his ships, the Army commander with the shore operation, while between these two extremes there are many problems...(notably) conflicting evaluation of time and space.[40]

It was that factor of time and space that was to continue to plague the 27th Division in the war in the Pacific. Allan R. Millett stated it best: "Even if the 'hurry-up' Marine tactical approach to atoll warfare cost lives in it's early phases, it seemed preferable to the Army emphasis on careful attack." The interpretation of which set of tactics was best obviously lay with the senior commander and, therefore, since the Central Pacific would always be commanded by a Navy admiral the answer was clear. The loss of an aircraft carrier while that ship was protecting the ground forces ashore was an unacceptable loss if the accomplishment of the ground mission could have been speeded up.[41]

The invasion of Makin was a qualified success. Qualified in that the mission was accomplished but at an unacceptable cost, i.e., the loss of an aircraft carrier. The initiation to combat of one Regimental Combat Team, elements of another battalion, the division staff, all were

positive aspects of GALVANIC. The division commander was aware of the shortcomings of his troops as was identified in the after action report and measures were taken to overcome them. Despite Major General H.M. Smith's invective, the 27th Infantry Division would continue to do their duty in the Pacific.

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[2]Edmund G. Love, The 27th Infantry Division in World War II (Wash., DC: The Infantry Journal Press, 1949), p.23.

[3]Holland M. Smith, Coral and Brass (NY: Scribners, 1949), p.118.

[4]The Pictorial History of the 27th Division (Atl., GA, Army-Navy Publishers, Inc., 1942).

[5]Annual Report of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau 1942 (Wash., DC: War Dept, National Guard Bureau, 1942).

[6]Historical Division, War Dept, The Capture of Makin, American Forces in Action Series, (Wash., DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1946), p.24.

[7]Philip A. Crowl and Edmund G. Love, US Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific: The Seizure of the Gilberts and the Marshalls (Wash., DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1955), p.45.

[8]Ibid.

[9]HQ, 27th Division, "Participation of Task Force 52.6, 27th Division, in GALVANIC (Makin) Operation", 11 December 1943, p.1.

[10]Crowl and Love, The Seizure of the Gilberts and the Marshalls, p.62.

[11]Ibid.

[12]HQ, 27th Division, Annex #2 (Intelligence) to Field Order #21, 20 October 1943, p.1.

[13]HQ, 27 Division, Appendix 1 to Annex #2, Field Order #21, 28 October 1943, p.1.

[14]Ibid., p.2.

[15]Crowl and Love, The Seizure of the Gilberts and the Marshalls, p.72.

[16]HQ, 27th Division, Annex #2 to Field Order #21, 20 October 1943, p.1.

[17]Crowl and Love, The Seizure of the Gilberts and the Marshalls, p.71.

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[18]HQ, 27th Division, Annex #9 (Embarkation and Debarkation Tables), Field Order #21, 22 October 1943, pp.1-3.

[19]The Capture of Makin, p.25.

[20]HQ, 27th Division, Field Order #21, 20 October 1943, p.1.

[21]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 20 November 1943, serial #9.

[22]Ibid., serial #18, 19, 20.

[23]The Capture of Makin, p.42 and HQ, 27th Division, G2 Journal, 20 November 1943, serial #32.

[24]HQ, 27th Division, G2 Journal, 20 November 1943, serial #35.

[25]The Capture of Makin, pp.44-46 and HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 20 November 1943, serial #30,42.

[26]The Capture of Makin, pp.51-62.

[27]Ibid., pp.71-72.

[28]Ibid., pp.72-73.

[29]Ibid., pp.72-75.

[30]Crowl and Love, The Seizure of the Gilberts and the Marshalls, pp.95-97.

[31]Ibid., p.99 and The Capture of Makin, pp.84-85.

[32]Ibid., pp.99-101 and p.85.

[33]Ibid., pp.99-101 and pp.86-87.

[34]Crowl and Love, The Seizure of the Gilberts and the Marshalls, p.100.

[35]Ibid., p.106.

[36]Smith, Coral and Brass, p.126.

[37]Ibid., pp.168-169.

[38]Crowl and Love, The Seizure of the Gilberts and the Marshalls, p.108.

[39]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 21 November 1943, serial #19.

[40]Crowl and Love, The Seizure of the Gilberts and the Marshalls, pp.112-113.

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[41]Ibid., p.116, The Capture of Makin, pp.100-106, and HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 21 November 1943, serial #18.

[42]Crowl and Love, The Seizure of the Gilberts and the Marshalls, p.116 and HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 21 November 1943, serial #37.

[43]The Capture of Makin, p.108.

[44]Smith, Coral and Brass, p.123.

[45]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 22 November 1943, serial #12, 14, 16; The Capture of Makin, pp.111-112; and Crowl and Love, The Seizure of the Gilberts and the Marshalls, pp.118-119.

[46]Ibid., serial #17; p.115; and pp.118-119.

[47]The Capture of Makin, p.118.

[48]Ibid., pp.118-119 and Crowl and Love, The Seizure of the Gilberts and the Marshalls, p.123.

[49]Ibid., pp.120-121 and p.123.

[50]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 23 November 1943, serial #9 and The Capture of Makin, pp.121-124.

[51]Allan R. Millett, Semper Fidelis: The History of the USMC, (NY: The Macmillan Publishing Co., 1980), pp.398-399.

[52]Smith, Coral and Brass, p.125.

[53]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 23 November 1943, serial #35.

[54]The Capture of Makin, p.132.

[55]Smith, Coral and Brass, p.111.

[56]MG Ralph Smith, "Report: Participation of the US Army Forces in the Central Pacific in GALVANIC Operation", 17 June 1944, p.7.

[57]Ibid., p.2.

[58]Ibid., p.1 and Annex 1, "Report: Participation of the US Army Forces in the Central Pacific in GALVANIC Operation", p.2.

[59]Annex 1, p.1.

[60]Ibid.

[61]Millett, History of the USMC, pp.398-399.

CHAPTER 5

SAIPAN

The preponderance of the force that reduced Makin embarked for Hawaii on the 24th of November 1943. The 3rd Battalion, augmented with engineers, tanks, artillery, signalmen, medics, and surgical teams, was left to clear the last remnants of Japanese resistance. This mission was to consume LTC Hart's men a little over a month.[1]
The 1st and 2nd Battalions, 165th Infantry, and the remainder of the GALVANIC force returned to Oahu where they dressed their wounds, replaced lost equipment, and reorganized to meet the next mission.

The 106th Regimental Combat Team had been alerted before GALVANIC that they would participate in the invasion of the Marshalls. Colonel Russell Ayers trained his soldiers vigorously from August until 16 December when they embarked on a five-day training cruise to Maui. Upon returning from that cruise the Regiment learned that the mission had changed

slightly. The 2nd Battalion, 106th Infantry would land and seize the island of Majuro while the remainder of the RCT would continue to be the floating reserve for the invasion force on Kwajalein.[2]

LTC Frederic Sheldon, commander of the the 2nd Battalion, 106th Infantry, would form a battalion landing team and serve as the landing and garrison force for Majuro. The 33 year old Sheldon was a rising star in the division. He completed both the Infantry School's Battalion Commanders and Staff Officer's Course and the Command and General Staff Officer's Course in 1941. Sheldon received his early military training at The Manlius School in upstate New York and in the National Guard which he joined in 1933. A Captain upon Federal recognition in October 1940 he reached the rank of lieutenant colonel by 21 March 1942.

The 2nd Battalion trained separately from the rest of the regiment during the period between their return from the training cruise (21 December) until they embarked for Majuro (21 January). They landed against no opposition on 31 January and remained as a garrison force until 5 March when they reembarked for Oahu. They encountered no enemy and, therefore, sustained no casualties.[3]

The 1st and 3rd Battalions, 106th Infantry, sailed for Kwajalein on the 21st of January as the reserve force. Colonel Russell Ayers, an Organized Reserve Corps officer, was the RCT commander undergoing his first combat action.

The 1st Battalion was commanded by 45 year old LTC Winslow Cornett, a veteran of the First World War and silver star holder. The 3rd Battalion was commanded by LTC Harold I. Mizony. Both had served in the New York National Guard since the early 1920s.

The RCT was not needed at Kwajalein, and was therefore, diverted to Eniwetok on 15 February. The two battalion landing teams assaulted the beach on 19 February and found stiff opposition.[4] During the three days of intense fighting the RCT was indoctrinated in the hazards of jungle warfare. In one Japanese counterattack consisting of heavy small arms and mortar fire, the inexperienced men of Company D turned and ran. One Lieutenant, Artie Klein, was reported by Captain Edmund G. Love, historian of the 27th Division, to have halted their flight by brandishing his carbine and yelling, "I'll shoot the first son of a bitch that takes another step backward. You bastards are supposed to be All-American soldiers. Now let's see you show some guts!"[5]

By the 24th of February all effective resistance had been eliminated. The 106th Infantry served as the garrison force on Eniwetok until replaced by the 111th Infantry in late March. Colonel Ayers and his soldiers arrived back at Oahu on the 13th of April 1944.[6]

The small actions which elements of the division were involved with served to inoculate them against the "horrors

of war". The division headquarters, the 105th Field Artillery Battalion, the 102nd Medical Battalion, the 102nd Engineer Battalion, the 152nd Engineer Battalion, the 165th Infantry, and 3rd Battalion, 105th Infantry were all blooded on Makin. They now had a better understanding of the type of cooperation necessary to be successful in combat. The 106th Infantry and 104th Field Artillery Battalion received their baptism of fire on Eniwetok. The 1st and 2nd Battalions, 105th Infantry were the only maneuver units in the division to remain inviolate.

The preparation, movement, and execution of the various small actions (Makin, Majuro, Eniwetok) took their toll in the effective training time available to the division. The entire division was together on Oahu for only two months prior to shipping out on FORAGER (the invasion of the Marianas). There were a number of changes within the leadership of the division prior to FORAGER. The senior commanders and staff officers remained the same, i.e., the commanding general, the assistant division commander, the G1, G2, G4. The G3, however, changed from LTC Dayton L. Robinson, an enlisted veteran of World War I and a regular army officer, to Major Henry F. Ross, a long time member of the New York National Guard, to LTC Frederic Sheldon, most recently the commander of the 2nd Battalion, 106th Infantry. This transition actually began before Makin as LTC Robinson planned that action and handed it off to Ross to execute.

Henry Ross then was selected to attend the Army's Command and General Staff School in 1944 which opened the door for LTC Sheldon to enter as the division's principal planner for FORAGER. Sheldon would continue in that position for the duration of the battle for Saipan. Ross would become the Deputy G3 upon his graduation and ultimately replace LTC Joe Farley as executive officer of the 106th Infantry Regiment during the fight on Saipan.

The regimental commanders all remained the same as Colonel Kelley returned from the hospital following his wounding on Makin to resume command of the 165th Infantry. Within the 165th Infantry Regiment all battalion commanders remained the same. In the 1st Battalion two of the four company commanders changed to men with no combat experience. All of the 2nd Bn's commanders returned and in the 3rd battalion there was only one new commander. In the 105th Infantry all battalion and company commanders remained the same. In the 106th Infantry Regiment Sheldon was replaced by 33 year old Major Almerin C. O'Hara, a recent graduate of the Command and General Staff School. The other battalion commanders remained the same. In the 1st Bn two of the four company commanders changed and in the 3rd Bn one commander changed.[7] All of the nine infantry battalion commanders were New York National Guardsmen and only Colonel Ayers among the regimental commanders was not.

As was already mentioned the division staff remained essentially the same except for the critical position of G3. LTC William Van Antwerp with Major Jacob Herzog assisting continued to run the G2 as they had at Makin. LTC Charles Ferris, with the Makin experience to fall back on, would remain as the G4, responsible for the intricate planning of the ship's load. Colonel Albert K. Stebbins would continue as the Chief of Staff and Brigadier Ogden J. Ross as the Assistant Division Commander.[8]

Even while the division was planning and participating in the operations in Makin, Majuro, and Eniwetok the Joint Chiefs of Staff were developing the next sequential step. In August 1943, at the Quebec Conference, it was decided that the Southern Marianas would be invaded. This decision was included in a Joint Chiefs of Staff directive released on 23 December 1943 which Admiral Nimitz used as a basis for his campaign plan. On 20 March Nimitz released a staff study outlining his goals for FORAGER which established the target date of 15 June 1944. CINCPAC and CINCPOA Operation Order 3-44 announced the basic plan for the operation and subsequent changes were published on 6 and 12 May. These orders directed the establishment of Task Force 56, Expeditionary Troops, under Major General Holland M. Smith. Command of the operation came under Rear Admiral R. Kelly Turner.[9] There were six commanders and six different headquarters involved in developing plans or parts of plans

for FORAGER: Admiral Nimitz, CINCPAC and CINCPOA (Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet and Commander-in-Chief Pacific Ocean Areas); Vice Admiral Raymond Spruance, Commander, Central Pacific Forces; Rear Admiral Kelly Turner, 5th Amphibious Force; MG H.M. Smith, V Amphibious Corps; LTG Robert C. Richardson, Central Pacific Ocean Areas; and MG Ralph C. Smith, commanding general 27th Division.[10]

A study conducted after the war at the Army's Command and General Staff School found a number of faults in the command structure established for FORAGER. One of the major flaws identified by the study was in the staff work performed by the headquarters of TF 56 and of V Amphibious Corps. Essentially, one staff was split to form two for FORAGER planning and execution, with no augmentation to help either with the immensity of the task at hand.[11]

The planning problems of the 27th Division were magnified many times over because they were designated as the corps reserve and, therefore, had to plan for 21 contingencies. The three major ones were: to support the Marine landings on Saipan; to support the Marine landings on Guam; to launch an assault themselves on Tinian. As there was no way to predict with surety the implementation of any of the plans, the staff had to prepare a tactical plan for each. The major problem was left with the G4 who had to load the boats not knowing which of the 21 plans would be utilized. Obviously, a loading plan which optimized the gradual debarkation of

forces, materiel, and supplies on a secure beach would not adequately support an assault landing on a hot beach.[12] Aside from the planning problems inherent with being the reserve for an amphibious operation the 27th also had to contend with the truculence of Marine Corps MG H.M. Smith. Smith said this of the division: "After my experience with the 27th at Makin and Eniwetok, I was reluctant to use them again in the Marianas, but...they were the only troops available and I had to take them."[13]

Training for FORAGER was a division planned and executed function. Neither V Amphibious Corps nor TF 56 issued any training directives nor did they inspect or supervise. As the Army's Command and General Staff School's study on recent operations determined after the war, this hands-off approach led to "petty tactical differences which combat later magnified into such strategically monumental disagreements that ground operations were not only thereby hampered, but casualties were materially increased."[14]

The division received warning that they would take part in the Marianas Operation and as such should prepare for a land mass battle instead of the atoll warfare which they had experienced at Makin and Eniwetok. Training was intense and concentrated on the following: weapons qualification for all personnel with their assigned weapon; familiarization with all weapons organic to their unit; swimming 50 yards with and without clothing and equipment; physical conditioning in the

form of a one-mile run each day; one-hour per day of organized athletics; bayonet training and hand-to-hand combat. Scouting and patrolling emphasized small unit leadership training and operations at night. Six of the division's nine infantry battalions participated in the Waiahole exercises which integrated infantry, artillery, tank, engineer, and air corps operations to achieve the combined arms effect. Personal hygiene, field sanitation, and first aid were subjects taught and retaught to everyone. All soldiers participated in map reading exercises while the officers and NCOs took an advanced course along with aerial photograph interpretation.[15] The companies and platoons received further instruction in the proper organization of a perimeter defense to include the plan of fire and security. Engineers received specialized training in the use of flamethrowers and demolitions and the companies all participated with their habitually associated infantry regiment in tactical exercises.[16] Advanced amphibious training was conducted 18 through 24 May utilizing the ships which would carry the division to the Marianas. The troops didn't embark in the landing craft or Alligators as there were limited amounts of this critical equipment and no replacements available should any be damaged.[17]

The division staff didn't have sufficient time to plan the many operations that were expected of them nor did they have adequate time to rehearse or practice their staff

duties. The regimental and battalion staffs were better prepared by virtue of their having served together longer. However, the staff principals, the S2, S3, and S4 were seriously deficient in formal schooling for their functional area. There is no evidence that training was conducted to integrate the duties and responsibilities of the V Amphibious Corps, Task Force 56, the two Marine Divisions, and the 27th Division.

Saipan itself was a volcanic and coral limestone island with elevations extending from sea level to several hundred feet. The hills and ridges were honeycombed with caves and tunnels, some natural but many more man made. They varied in size from one-man size to several hundred yards in length and most had some type of natural concealment at the entrance.[16] The officers and NCOs of the division were issued completely inaccurate maps which hopelessly misrepresented the terrain over which they would be fighting. None of the topographic maps were of sufficient quality to use for fire control. It was only after a Japanese map was captured early in the fighting, hastily overprinted, reproduced, and issued that the soldiers had a reliable fire control instrument.[17]

The Japanese made maximum use of the terrain in establishing their defense of the island. As LTG H.M. Smith noted in his first hand account, Coral and Brass, the enemy occupied every piece of terrain which afforded them a

tactical advantage. They emplaced artillery and mortars in the caves along the cliffs of the dominating hills and dug in their infantry precisely where American marines and soldiers would have to proceed. Smith explained that the tactics on Saipan were like no other and were not the evolutionary development of previous amphibious assaults such as Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and the Marshalls. Saipan would have to be a "savage battle of annihilation."[20] The size of the enemy force on Saipan was put at 29,662 and was, according to Smith, the largest garrison on any island in the Marianas. He also stated that the Japanese soldiers were extremely confident and gained great spiritual strength from the belief that their navy could reinforce and resupply them at will.[21]

The movement of the division from Oahu to Saipan was a debilitating experience. The transports were extremely crowded permitting no opportunity for physical training. The duration of the transit, 15 to 24 days, resulted in a noticeable deterioration in the condition of the soldiers. The shortage of space also limited the extent to which battalion and company officers could prepare for the assault. The division's planners did not have adequate time in Hawaii to coordinate the many different variations of the assault and, therefore, were reduced to closing the loop on board ship. The commanders attempted to brief their soldiers on the important considerations of the operation but, again,

lack of space and too many different plans meant that the troops got only a cursory glance.[22]

The actual move began on 25 May 1944. On the 11th of June, while the Task Force was still steaming west, Admiral Marc Mitscher's Task Force 58 launched an air attack on the Marianas. The carrier based attack force destroyed 150 Japanese planes on the ground and in the air. The U.S. never ceded air superiority again for the duration of the campaign. On the 12th and 13th the planes of TF 58 again attacked the Marianas to ensure that the Japanese had no capability to counter the invasion. The surface bombardment of Saipan by naval aircraft of TF 58 commenced on the 13th while bombardment of the landing beaches and inland defensive positions by surface vessels commenced on 14 June. Underwater demolition teams landed to clear the beaches of deadly obstacles on the 14th as well. At 0815 hours of the 15th the assault waves of the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions crossed their line of departure en route to beaches on the southwest coast of Saipan. Enemy resistance to the landing consisted primarily of mortar and artillery fire resulting in 3,500 reported casualties.[23] The 27th Division remained aboard their transports as no decision had yet been made as to where they would be employed.

The 27th's actions on Saipan can be divided into four distinct phases. The first was their landing and subsequent operations to capture Aslito Airfield and clear Nafutan

Point. The second phase was the attack into Death Valley and the clearing of the enemy from Purple Heart Ridge. The third phase was the attack into Paradise Valley and the action on the Tanapag Plain. The fourth and last phase was the mopping up operation that took place after the organized resistance on Saipan had been declared ended.

The situation on Saipan was such that H.M. Smith ordered the 27th to land all but the 106th RCT which would remain in floating reserve. LTG Smith, later, stated that he "impressed upon him (MG Smith) the need for strong, offensive action on Saipan. The Japanese were on the run, I told him, and in order to lick them we had to keep them moving."[24] The 165th RCT landed on the evening of the 16th over the same beaches used by the 4th Marine Division to whom they were immediately attached. The following morning the 105th Field Artillery Battalion landed and was assigned a direct support role to the 165th. Also on the 17th the remainder of the DIVARTY (106th Field Artillery and 249th Field Artillery) except for the 104th Field Artillery, landed and went into general support.

The 165th, on the 17th, advanced 1,200 yards inland allowing more of the 27th to land. MG Ralph Smith landed and assumed command of the division. The 105th Infantry Regiment landed without it's headquarters, service troops, and cannon company. The regimental headquarters would not be able to land until the 27th of June. Due to this mixup the 1st

battalion was attached to the 165th, the 2nd battalion became NTLF reserve, and the 3rd battalion became division reserve. The 106th remained aboard as the reserve force for the Southern Troops and Landing Force (STLF) then preparing to assault Guam.[23]

The 27th Division began to fight as a division on 18 June with the 165th and 105th Infantry Regiments attacking east to capture Aslito Airfield and to clear Nafutan Point. The airfield was captured late in the morning but the Nafutan Point would remain a thorn in their side until 2 July.

For four days the division probed, massed artillery fires, and maneuvered infantry and tank forces against the tenacious enemy. The fighting was characterized by intense small arms and mortar fire which the Japanese were able to concentrate at will. Occupying fortified caves among the steep hills of southern Saipan, the enemy was all but impervious to the traditional tactics employed by the army. But, as they had learned on Makin, the coordinated efforts of tanks to suppress while infantry and engineers maneuvered to the flanks and rear proved effective. The two regiments were making slow but regular progress against the Japanese.[24]

In conjunction with the ground battle occurring on Saipan, Spruance's fleet was engaging the Japanese navy in the Battle of the Philippine Sea. This action, known colloquially as the Marianas Turkey Shoot, saw the destruction of 383 Japanese planes to only 25 Americans.

This ended any further effort on the part of the Japanese navy to interfere with the invasion of the Marianas.[27]

The division staff, throughout this phase, was having difficulty issuing operations orders more than a few hours in advance. They would typically notify the units with a warning order the night prior to commencement, however, this still limited the amount of reconnaissance or other preparation that could be conducted. Detailing specific coordinating instructions to the various subordinate organizations was the principal value of the written operations order. This inability of the division staff to produce those written orders in a timely fashion severely detracted from the efficiency of the whole organization.[28]

The inability to land the whole of the 105th Infantry had a severe impact on their capability to accomplish their mission. Without the vehicles of their headquarters or service companies the regiment had extreme difficulty in effecting reasonable command and control or in providing the minimum necessary combat service support. Without their organic cannon company, consisting of 75mm self-propelled guns, the regiment was incapable of suppressing the enemy while the infantry and engineers rooted them out.

Once the division was issued NTLF Operations order #9-44, 21 June 1944, the mission of clearing Nafutan Point lay solely with one battalion, plus a platoon of light tanks, to be determined by the division commander. The remainder of

the division, excluding the 1st Bn, 106th Infantry which was attached to the 2nd Marine Division, was to consolidate in the northwest corner of Aslito Airfield as NTLF reserve.[27]

At 1700 hours MG Smith, after a discussion with LTG Smith concerning the clearance of Nafutan Point, ordered the 105th Infantry Regiment to remain and affect that reduction. The Smiths were able to agree that one battalion could not carry out the mission, especially in the treacherous terrain of southern Saipan. At 2130 hours the division issued operations order #45A which directed the 165th to assemble at 0630 hours on the 22nd and await orders; directed the 105th to relieve elements of the 165th in their sector, to continue offensive operations against the enemy, and to hold one battalion in division reserve; directed the 106th to remain in their present location awaiting orders; and directed the DIVARTY to remain in their present positions but under control of XXIV Corps Artillery.

At 0830 hours on the 22nd the 105th assumed responsibility for the entire front facing Nafutan Point. Also at 0830 hours the division received from NTLF headquarters the written change to Operations Order #9-44 in which one RCT of the 27th would remain to clean out the resistance on Nafutan Point vice one battalion. NTLF's operations order #9-44 directing one RCT to clear out the enemy on Nafutan Point would be one of LTG Smith's principal pieces of evidence to show why MG Smith should be relieved.

The division operations order #45A, issued the night before, had given tactical instructions to a unit not under the control of that division, i.e., the 105th was told by the 27th to clear out Nafutan Point when it was solely the perogative of NTLF to issue orders to the 105th.[30]

MG Smith received verbal instructions for the mission on 23 June at 1530 hours. LTC Lemp, Army Ground Forces observer, noted in his report that there wasn't sufficient time to move artillery and maneuver forces into position prior to commencement for this attack. The 165th Infantry spent most of the day en route to the new division assembly area northwest of Aslito Airfield. The 105th attacked south against the dug-in Japanese infantry on Nafutan Point and, as was the case in the previous two days, met strong resistance.[31] LTC Lemp, a field artilleryman, stated that the regiment "manifested a certain amount of inertia. In this particular instance the division might be censured for it's lack of spirit in moving forward."[32] Though not exhibiting the necessary <u>elan</u> nor accomplishing the mission of cleaning out Nafutan Point the regiment sustained 18 killed and 54 wounded in bloody, determined fighting against a fanatical enemy.[33] Eight of the killed and 32 of the reported wounded were the result of friendly naval gunfire when one of the supporting destroyers launched five 5" shells into the command post of the 2nd Battalion.[34]

At 2330 hours on the 22nd the division received the written Operations Order #10-44 from NTLF. This would begin the second phase of the division's activity on Saipan: the attack into Death Valley and the clearing of Purple Heart Ridge All three divisions would attack abreast with the 27th in the center making the main effort. The area into which the 27th attacked was a valley, dominated in the west by Mt Topatchau, rising 1554 feet above sea level, and a lower but nonetheless prominent ridge line, Purple Heart Ridge, to the east. The division's zone included the ridge in the east, the valley floor, and the precipitous cliffs that were formed at the junction of the valley and Mt Topatchau.[33] The valley, soon to be known as Death Valley, was bare except for a line of trees near the southern end. The high ground to the west, nearing Mt Topatchau, was studded with caves of all sizes, capable of concealing machine guns, mortars, artillery pieces, and anti-tank guns. In the 27th's sector, the 106th would attack on the left and the 165th on the right. Both regiments would have to pass through the rear areas of the 4th Marine Division to reach the line of departure which was the forward line of friendly troops. The 105th, minus the 2nd Battalion, would be in division reserve. The time scheduled for the attack was 1000 hours.[34]

After one day's action against the enemy in Nafutan Point the 105th was ordered to join the division as NTLF reserve

for the operation in the center of the island. The 2nd Battalion, 105th, under the command of veteran National Guardsmen, Major Edward McCarthy, would be left to reduce the enemy that earlier had been holding out successfully against two regiments of the division. With only one platoon of light tanks, with ineffective 37mm guns, Major McCarthy faced an almost impossible task.[37] The division had 16 medium tanks and 23 light tanks fully operational and capable of supporting the attack. There was only one good road travelling in a north-south direction and according to the the division's operations order this belonged solely to the 165th Infantry Regiment. Both regiments were directed to move off of the roads as much as was practicable, but, given that the time available to advance to the line of departure was scarce, it was not practicable to advance cross-country. LTC Lemp noted, incorrectly, that the 165th had taken the wrong road and thus caused the confusion and attendant delay. In the narrative report written by the HQ, 106th Infantry after the operation, blame was laid to the guides furnished by the 4th Marine Division for not bringing the regiment to the LD unimpeded. King Hour (attack time) came and went and the 27th didn't attack. The 165th apparently was prepared to attack but was waiting for the 106th to come up.[38]

The 165th apparently never received word nor did they understand that the 106th had attacked and, therefore, they

waited at the LD (line-of-departure) until 1315 hours. Despite repeated calls from division, beginning at 1005 hours, requesting the location of their front lines and disposition of forces, the 165th didn't attack. At 1210 hours the Commanding General of the 27th directed the 165th to "push your advance rapidly regardless of advance of 106th Infantry. Employ reserve if necessary."[39] This late attack was the key incident which initiated LTG Smith's relief action against MG Smith.

To facilitate the advance of the 106th a platoon of medium tanks was attached in addition to a platoon of M-7 self-propelled howitzers, to counter the strong mortar and heavy machine gun fire which the enemy was able to concentrate in the 106th's sector. NTLF G3 Colonel Robert E. Hogaboom opined that very little advance was made in the 27th's sector because the attack was not coordinated and that confusion dominated the chain of command. Probably closer to the truth was the fact that the terrain dictated the rate of advance and tended to complicate coordination problems, i.e., the fog of war interceded on behalf of the defending Japanese. LTC Lemp identified the enemy fire as intense, emanating from caves in the vicinity of sheer cliffs. Immediately upon crossing the LD the 1st Battalion was pinned down by enemy fire. The 2nd Battalion advanced 250 yards. The 106th continued to make minimal gains against the concentrated small arms in their sector, especially after

integrating the work of the recently attached tanks. At 1715 hours the 106th inserted their 2nd Battalion onto their left flank to tie in with the 2nd Marine Division. As the momentum of the attack was approaching it's culminating point the division's two regiments organized their defenses for the night. At 1936 hours the 106th reported that enemy tanks and infantry were attacking their perimeter.[40]

The advance of the regiment was hindered by enfilading small arms, mortar, and artillery fire coming from the high ground to their left in the 106th's sector. Despite heavy casualties the regiment progressed 400 yards beyond the LD prior to nightfall. The 165th reported that six tanks attacked their 2nd Battalion at 1915 hours and five were destroyed by 37mm guns and bazookas.[41]

The action of 23 June established the pattern of activity in Death Valley until 29 June. For those six days the division attacked with infantry and tanks following artillery, naval gunfire, and close air support preparation. The enemy occupied well concealed caves and foxholes from which they delivered devastating small arms, mortar, and artillery fire. Each day the division launched an attack, typically with two regiments up, into the heart of the valley under withering enfilading fire from the dominant terrain on both sides. At nightfall the battalions of the 27th would arrange a defensive perimeter to thwart any enemy attempt at penetration. And the Japanese typically challenged that

defense either through infiltration or frontal attack. The nature of the enemy and the terrain held the advance of the 27th to a mere 2,000 yards during this period.[42]

Also characteristic of the activity during this period was the lateness at which HQ, NTLF issued their operations orders. Operations order #10-44 was issued at 2330 hours, #11-44 at 2250 hours, #12-44 at 1900 hours, #13-44 at 0110 hours, and #14-44 at 0040 hours. In every case these orders directed attacks to commence at first light the very next day. This permitted the subordinate commanders no time for daylight reconnaissance of the area into which they would attack and precious little time to coordinate attachments and supporting gunfire. Time was the scarcest resource on Saipan and for staffs with the shallow depth of experience that characterized the 27th this was a critical shortage.[43] An example of the type of operation that the division generated was that which was to occur on 29 June per NTLF Operations Order #16-44. The 1st and 3rd Battalions, 165th plus the 1st Bn, 105th were attached to the 4th Marine Division. The HQ 105th Infantry would control their own 3rd Bn and the 2nd Bn, 165th. The 106th Infantry was intact for this operation. The 105th would pass through the 4th Marine Division and attack to the north while the 106th did likewise on their left. This was the Corps' main effort and yet their were only four battalions attacking as one of the 106th's was in division reserve.[44] The cross attachment of battalions

between regiments, even highly trained regiments, is difficult at best. Commanders and staffs develop routines that enable them to function in stressful, trying conditions and the introduction of an external organization tends to disrupt that routine. Add to this the turmoil attendant to a passage of lines with the force of another service and a situation is presented that is ripe with potential disaster.

From the 23rd until the 28th every NTLF attack had three divisions on line with the main effort in the center. The line-up had the 2nd Marine Division on the left attacking against the heights of Mt Topatchau, the 27th in the center into Death Valley, and the 4th Marine Division on the right along the coastal plain. Despite the fact that the main effort was in the center of the line there was no build up of that force to adhere to the principles of mass, offensive, and objective. NTLF declared the 27th to be the main effort yet never augmented them with additional tanks or infantry. In fact, they often further debilitated the division by taking battalions away to give to the other Divisions as they did 27-29 June. Furthermore, the terrain in the center of the Corps sector, Death Valley, was without question the most difficult and most heavily defended piece of terrain on the island.[48]

The division operated in Death Valley just as they had in southern Saipan: a deliberate and methodical approach to identifying the enemy and then rooting him out. The 27th

progressed very slowly and often lost contact with the Marine Divisions on each flank. LTG Smith slowed and even stopped the Marines on many occasions to reduce the hazard of an open flank. That the division wasn't advancing as rapidly as expected was not lost on MG Smith. In particular, on 24 June, he was embarrassed and disturbed by the lack of progress of the 106th and by it's inability to maintain contact with the Marines. His message to Colonel Ayers was not ambiguous: "Advance of 50 yards in one and a half hours is most unsatisfactory. Start moving at once." On this day the 106th suffered 14 killed and 112 wounded in seven hours of attacking into the teeth of the enemy. [46]

At 1800 hours, 24 June 1944, MG Ralph Smith was relieved from command of the 27th Division for cause. The failure of the 27th to attack on the 23rd on time, their apparent lack of enthusiasm for attacking the enemy, and the earlier issuance of directives to a tactical unit not under their control, was the case presented to Admiral Spruance by LTG Smith. Justifying the relief of MG Smith, LTG Smith said, "In my judgement, the conduct of the 27th Division under Ralph Smith's command was unsatisfactory and I acted accordingly. I would have relieved a Marine general under the same circumstances only sooner."[47] In support of LTG Smith, Admiral Spruance said: "He has been in command of that division for a long time and cannot avoid being held

responsible for it's fighting efficiency or lack thereof."[46]

The relief of one commander by another need only be justified in the mind of the higher commander. LTG Smith lost confidence in the ability of MG Smith to carry out his duties and responsibilities. He was then compelled to replace him with someone who provided a reasonable assurance that those duties and responsibilities would be executed. Major General Sanderford Jarman assumed command of the 27th Division upon Smith's relief. Jarman, a 1908 graduate of the US Military Academy was 59 years old and had been programmed to be the Commander of the Saipan Garrison Force after it's capture.[47]

LTG Robert C. Richardson, Commander-in-Chief Pacific Ocean Areas, the senior Army officer in the Central Pacific Theater, convened a board of inquiry to determine the justification and cause of MG Smith's relief. The board was chaired by LTG Simon B. Buckner and consisted solely of Army officers who only examined Army witnesses. The board met in Hawaii in August 1944 and returned a decision which upheld LTG Smith's authority to relief MG Smith but also determined that the facts did not warrant such a relief. At the heart of the controversy was the issue of Army forces subordinate to Marine commanders. LTG Richardson, an Army corps commander during the Louisiana-Tennessee maneuvers, questioned the ability of Marine commanders to direct

organizations as large as corps. The Marine Corps had been no larger than a division throughout it's history and the training and education of officers to command these larger units was suspect. The issue that had a greater impact on the division was that of tactical significance. The Marine approach to warfare in he Pacific was characterized by dash, bypassing large enemy forces, speed, and high casualties. The Army approach was slower, more methodical, with a greater awareness for casualties which bordered on extreme caution, and a reluctance to bypass enemy forces.[50]

The replacement of MG Smith was expected to instill new life into the moribund division and inspire them to faster, more decisive results. Whatever the effect on the morale of the soldiers they still had to contend with the entrenched and heavily fortified, fanatical Japanese occupying terrain ideal for the defense. The 27th continued to fight in the manner in which they had been trained, that is, to suppress suspected and known enemy positions with tank and self-propelled gunfire and maneuver to the flanks and root out with demolitions. Their progress was still painfully slow in comparison to the Marines on their flanks.

On 26 June the 106th Infantry attacked Purple Heart Ridge as the main effort for the division and was stopped with no gain after incurring moderate casualties. MG Jarman had his G3 and DIVARTY commander, both old Guardsmen, visit the regiment to determine the reason for their inability to carry

the attack. Their report of confusion and indecisiveness at the regimental headquarters caused Jarman to relieve both Colonel Ayers and LTC Joseph Farley, the regimental executive officer. They were replaced by the Division Chief of Staff, Colonel Albert K. Stebbins, and the Deputy G3, Major Henry Ross.[81]

The 45 year old Stebbins was a 1924 graduate of the US Military Academy, a graduate of the Command and General Staff School, and a Regular Army officer. Henry Ross, a member of the New York National Guard since 1925, had commanded Company M, 165th Infantry at Ft McClellan prior to being elevated to G3 of the division. In this role he executed GALVANIC and then was sent to the Command and General Staff School from which he graduated in March 1944. The introduction of two well qualified and proven men such as Stebbins and Ross was believed to be the answer to the ineptitude of the 106th. The changes appeared to have worked as the 106th began to have more success in their attacks for the duration of the campaign.[82]

The leadership of the division was changing on a daily basis. Shortly after Ayers and Farley were relieved Major Johnny Nichols, executive officer of the 1st Bn, 106th, and a highly respected veteran Guardsmen, was killed leading that battalion against the cliffs east of Mt Topatchau. LTC Harold Mizony, commander of the 106th's 3rd Bn, was killed attacking with his battalion up Purple Heart Ridge. Colonel

Gerard Kelley, commander of the 165th, was wounded by a mortar fragment and evacuated to the rear for the remainder of the campaign. Old Guardsmen, LTC Joseph T. Hart, past commander of he 3rd Bn, 165th, stepped in to replace Colonel Kelley at this critical time in the fight. LTC John McDonough, a veteran Guardsmen and only 37 years old, was wounded by small arms fire leading his 3rd Battalion, 165th. And the division underwent it's biggest change since MG Smith was relieved as MG George Griner replaced MG Jarman as commanding general on 28 June.[83]

MG Griner was 49 years old, a 1917 graduate of Southern Methodist University, and a veteran of World War I. He graduated from the Army's Command and General Staff School in 1933 and from the Army War College in 1939. He had been commanding the 98th Division in Hawaii when called to replace Jarman. MG Jarman became commander of the Army Garrison on Saipan, the role for which he was programmed.[84]

MG Griner issued Field Message #2 in the late afternoon, 29 June, announcing that the division would continue their attack in the morning at 0700 hours but also that LTG Smith had expressly complemented the performance of the officers and men of the division. The last piece of dominant terrain had been taken on Purple Heart Ridge thus allowing the reduction of the remainder of Death Valley.[85]

From 29 June until 3 July the division advanced approximately 5,000 yards, nearly two and one-half times as

far as they had during the previous nine days. Enemy resistance was rapidly diminishing and the fighting efficiency of the division, despite the cumulative effects of stress and lack of sleep, appeared to be increasing.

Late on 29 June division issued a message to all commanders from the CG, NTLF directing that they take immediate steps to improve the coordination between infantry, tanks, and artillery in clearing out the enemy. LTG Smith's position was that there was limited resistance in zone, a few machine guns, small arms, and a few mortars, and that because the Americans had an overwhelming edge in firepower they should quickly reduce the resistance. Rapid movement and seizure of objectives were imperative he said and to this the CG, 27th Division concurred. MG Griner expounded on this point in his own message to the commanders directing that tank and infantry commanders confer prior to the commencement of each attack to ensure that efforts of the tanks are not wasted. In the same message LTG Smith admonished the 27th for not following Army doctrine, i.e., massing artillery fire on the objective to suppress the enemy and then closely following up with infantry and/or tanks to ruthlessly annihilate the remaining opposition.[84]

The third phase of the division's operation on Saipan covered the period 3 July until 8 July. This period was significant because this is where the Japanese made their final stand. MG Griner chose to attack with the 105th

Infantry along the coast and the 165th inland with the 106th in reserve. The terrain in the 105th's sector was low, slightly rolling, and marshy. The 165th's was more severe with two hill masses, 721 and 767, that dominated, and a long, narrow valley that came to be known as Hara-Kiri Gulch. The attack kicked off on time and the 105th immediately met stiff resistance from pill boxes along the beach. The 165th was also receiving heavy fire which they countered with a coordinated tank and self-propelled artillery attack. The division fought over this 1,000 yards of sand and coconut grove for six days trading casualties with the Japanese. Lessons learned in the previous two weeks of fighting were implemented on the Tanapag Plain. Tanks and self-propelled guns were used to fire into the caves while infantry and engineers blasted the enemy out with demolitions. Lack of communications with the tanks continued to cause needless casualties. The tanks would advance against the enemy without supporting friendly infantry and become victims of the intrepid Japanese with Molotov Cocktails and satchel charges.[57]

By nightfall 6 July the 105th and 165th had halted their efforts to eliminate the enemy to their respective front. The 105th had two battalions forward overlooking the Tanapag Plain, a flat coastal region with moderate concealment and the other battalion was in reserve. The 165th also had two battalions up and one in reserve. The 106th was held in

division reserve behind the 105th. The two regiments, however, were not linked and a 500 yard gap existed between them. The gap was reported to division but no one felt obligated to fill it with a maneuver force. At 2142 hours a POW revealed that an all out attack was planned for the night of the 6th. The night's activity consisted of sniper fire and limited local counterattacks and at 0510 hours the 105th reported an enemy "saki attack".[58]

The best estimate of the size of that attack was 2500 to 3000 and made up of navy personnel, artillerymen, maintenance, labor, and infantrymen. Many of the attackers were armed with makeshift spears as their only weapon. While the 105th tenaciously fought off the ground attack the DIVARTY fired 2666 rounds in support an average of 40 rounds per minute, and yet couldn't stop the flood of Japanese. At 0720 hours the 105th reported that H Battery 10th Marines was overrun and that the Japanese had captured the guns intact. Also, at daybreak, the 3rd Bn, 165th was attacked by a large formation of Japanese who were routed, with 100 killed in the melee. The 2nd Battalion, 106th was fighting through the enemy to take back the Marine guns. There was no stopping the fanatical Japanese as they poured through the 105th. The two forward battalions were unable to present a coherent defense and they began to disintegrate. Individuals and squads, wounded and dying all streamed to the rear, sometimes

alongside the enemy, in an effort to reach American lines.[39]

On the right of the 105th, the 165th with the 3rd Bn, 106th was attacking into the enemy controlled Hara-Kiri Gulch. The advance was hindered by the steep terrain, caves filled with Japanese soldiers, spider holes, and pill boxes, all delivering a withering fire. Forward movement stopped at 1450 hours on division order as the rest of the day was spent putting long range machine gun fire into the cliffs.

To help stem the tide of attacking Japanese NTLF attached the 3rd Bn, 6th Marines. At 1100 the division requested additional tanks from HQ NTLF to thwart the enemy tanks which were reported moving to the south. This request was denied. The 106th attacked to relieve the pressure on the 105th at 1155 hours. Throughout the morning small groups and individuals of the 105th made their way out of enemy contact and back to friendly lines. Forty US soldiers and one PW were reported collected by Navy destroyers after they had evacuated the beach while another 75 were stranded on the reef. The 106th recaptured two batteries of the 10th Marines at 1305 hours. At 1340 hours elements of the 106th reached the 105th command post and engaged the enemy.[40]

By 0730 hours, 8 July 1944 the Japanese Banzai counterattack had spent itself leaving approximately 750 dead in front of the 106th.[41] There have been countless stories of personal heroism documented by the Army's official

historian, Captain Edmund G. Love, who was on-site for all of the Saipan campaign. Almost without exception they tell a tale of a junior enlisted man, wounded and exhausted, left behind on his own decision so as not to burden his buddies. The soldier would be found the next day by burying details, surrounded by numerous dead Japanese soldiers, with an empty pistol or rifle clenched in his dead hands. Two Medals of Honor were awarded to the 27th for their actions on Saipan and both were members of the 105th who did not survive the Gyokusai (saki attack) on 7 July 1944. LTC William J. O'Brien, 45 years old and a member of the New York National Guard since 1920, was the commander of the 1st Battalion, 105th. On the early morning of the 6th, LTC O'Brien valiantly tried rallying his exhausted troops to stem the tide of onrushing Japanese soldiers. The battalion held together as long as they did due to his personal heroism and charisma. He was last seen alive manning a .50 caliber machine gun and pouring fire into the attackers. Sergeant Thomas A. Baker, a member of Company A, 105th since 1940, had known only the National Guard. He was wounded on the 6th during the attack, crawled back to the rear of the battalion perimeter, spurned countless offers of help, and asked to be left with a weapon and a cigarette. He was found the next day with eight dead Japanese around him and the remains of a burned cigarette in his hand. There were numerous other

accounts of heroism but these two are characteristic of the fighting spirit of the division.[42]

This ended the third phase for the 27th and began the last which was the mopping up operation against any remaining Japanese on the island. The entire division would remain on the island until 6 August and continue to engage hundreds of Japanese soldiers.

Casualties among the three divisions were essentially even: the 4th Marine Division incurred 1506; 2nd Marine Division suffered 1016; and the 27th had 1465. The equality of numbers of casualties belies the difficulty of terrain within which each division operated. The 4th Marine Division, operating along the east coast had the decided advantage as there were no caves, cliffs, or heavily wooded areas to conceal the enemy. Therefore, their casualty figures should have been less than those of the other two divisions but this was not the case. The 2nd Marine Division fought across terrain almost as difficult as that of the 27th and certainly more strenuous than that of the 4th yet their casualties were significantly less than that of the 4th. The terrain over which the 27th traversed was the harshest and most beneficial to the defense. The cliffs of Mt Topatchau and the wooded hill masses of Purple Heart Ridge channeled the attacking Americans into the barren and coverless kill-zone known as Death Valley which is exactly what it was. The near equal numbers may help illustrate the

difference in tactics employed by the two ground forces. The Marines believed in a more hasty approach, bypassing large groups of enemy for the follow-on force to clean up. The Army, being more methodical, would necessarily incur fewer casualties because of their exercise of caution.[43]

There were countless lessons learned from the invasion of Saipan. The technical and tactical mistakes from which the Army learned and, by and large, corrected can be generally applied to any service in any theater in the Second World War. And, despite LTG Smith's personal attack on the National Guard, there is no relationship between the effectiveness of the Guard as an organization and the combat effectiveness of the 27th Division on Saipan. But then Smith's diatribe wasn't reserved solely for the 27th but was shared with the 7th Division who participated in the invasion of Kwajalein: "I could see no reason why this division with ample forces ashore, well covered by landbased artillery and receiving tremendous naval and air support could not take the island quicker." [44]

One of the very best after action reports from Saipan was written by a Canadian officer, Major Watts, who had been attached to the division to learn about American techniques, tactics, and equipment which might be appropriate in their army. Many of his observations were random and have varying degrees of applicability.

One advantage which the Marines had over the Army was in their Ronson flamethrowers mounted on light tanks. Had the 27th Division these devices there would have been fewer holdups in Death Valley and, therefore, the division would probably have kept up with the Marines on their flanks.[45] This implies that a reasonably inexpensive fix such as adding a flamethrower to a tank would have made the 27th into a more aggressive fighting force.

The units of the division typically travelled on roads or well defined trails and sniper fire was always encountered. There was also a tendency for the soldiers to skyline themselves. These errors are typical of poorly trained units hastily thrown into battle. Officers and NCOs who are unsure of their navigational skills will hold to the roads inviting enemy sniper fire.[46] These types of training errors should have been corrected during the interminably long train up that the division went through prior to arriving in combat.

The procedures used by commanders and staffs indicated too little knowledge and practise in the art of developing and disseminating information. Major Watts said that almost all operations orders were given from maps without a set pattern. In these orders there rarely was any pre-arranged artillery. Furthermore, the regiments and battalions of the division had a tendency to use NTLF graphics without elaboration. This haphazard approach to the command estimate process may work very well with experienced staffs who have

served together for many operations but works less well with the uninitiated. The battalion and regimental staffs of the 27th Division had undergone numerous changes since mobilization in 1940. The principal staff functionaries were not afforded the education of the Command and General Staff School although there were some exceptions. Even had they attended, the modifications forced on the school by the war tended to water down the resultant product.[47]

Both the Army and the Marines would halt their attack at nightfall and prepare defensive positions. Major Watts' observations were that the foxholes were only dug about 18 inches into the ground and there was no evidence of alternate positions prepared. The foxholes, typically, were too close together in an effort to deny infiltration lanes to the enemy. And rarely, if ever, were outposts positioned to provide early warning of an enemy attack. These deficiencies all point to training weaknesses and inadequacies of discipline. A professional NCO corps would ensure these errors were not repeated but good sergeants were not created overnight. The lack of professionalism in the 27th can be traced to the constant and continuous levies to fill OCS and other division cadres.[48]

After action reports were written by many of the regiments who participated in FORAGER, notably the 23rd Marines, 24th Marines, and 106th Infantry. They were similar in many of their observations. Both Marine Regiments

complained that the commanders and staff down to battalion level were unable to conduct reconnaissance of the area they were to attack because operations orders were so late arriving. The 27th Division typically received their written instructions from HQ, NTLF after dark permitting no time for examination of the terrain. Both Marine Regiments also castigated their higher headquarters for assigning objectives and unit boundaries with apparent disregard for the terrain. As the report of the 23rd Marine Regiment states: "Frequently the most difficult terrain was in the direct line of attack and could have been more easily secured by change of direction or other means." Both Marine Regiments and the 106th agree that a grave deficiency was the halting of the day's attack too near or after nightfall to permit resupply or the founding of an effective defense. The 23rd Marines identified a problem that was similar to that experienced by the 27th: the lack of consideration for space and time factors by the higher HQ. The 27th was ordered, on 21 June, to reorient their force and move several kilometers after dark to position themselves for an attack. The distance was too great and the time permitted too little to efficiently carry off this mission. The end result was the division's late attack and the ultimate relief of MG Smith.[47] LTC John Lemp, the Army Ground Force officer attached to the division, supported the observations made by the Marine Regiments that

higher headquarters operations orders arrived much too late to permit a ground reconnaissance.[70]

The deficiencies of the 27th Division on Saipan resembled those of all new divisions inserted into a situation for which they weren't adequately trained. The 32nd Division at Buna exhibited far greater tactical and technical mistakes and a complete lack of discipline. From a captured Japanese diary on Buna: "From sundown until about 2200 they fire light machine guns and throw hand grenades recklessly. They are in the jungle firing as long as their ammunition lasts. Maybe they get more money for firing so many rounds."[71]

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[1]Edmund G. Love, The History of the 27th Division, (Wash., DC: The Infantry Journal Press, 1949), p.55.

[2]Ibid., pp.56-57.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p.59

[5]Ibid., p.83

[6]Ibid., p.59.

[7]The Adjutant General's Office, Official Army Register, (Wash., DC: US Government Printing Office, 1 January 1944) and The Pictorial History of the 27th Division, (Atlanta, GA: Army-Navy Publishing, 1942).

[8]Ibid.

[9]Love, The History of the 27th Division, pp.112-114.

[10]Philip A. Crowl, The US Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific: Campaign in the Marianas, (Wash., DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1960), p. 99.

[11]Second Command Class, Command and General Staff School, Recent Operations, FORAGER (Marianas), Ft Leavenworth, KS, 14 May 1946, annex C, p.2.

[12]Major Watts, "Report of Canadian Officers Attached to 27th Infantry Division, US Army, for the Saipan Operation", 24 August 1944, p.1.

[13]Smith, Coral and Brass, p.168.

[14]Second Command Class, CGSS, FORAGER, annex C, p.4.

[15]Headquarters, 27th Infantry Division, "Battle for Saipan, 17 June - 6 August 1944", 24 October 1944, p.1.

[16]Ibid., p.4.

[17]Ibid., p.5.

[18]Canadian Officers Report, p.3.

[19]Canadian Officers Report, p.4 and Second Command Class, CGSS, FORAGER, annex c, p.5.

[20]Smith, Coral and Brass, p.160.

[21]Ibid., p.161.

[22]Canadian Officers Report, p.2.

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[23]Carl W. Hoffman, Saipan: The Beginning of the End, (Wash., DC: Historical Division, HQ USMC,1950), pp.34-42 and V Amphibious Corps Report on Marianas, Phase I, Saipan, Northern Troops and Landing Forces Report, p.11.

[24]Smith, Coral and Brass, p.172.

[25]HQ, V Amphibious Corps, Report on Marianas, Phase I, Saipan, NTLF Report, p.7.

[26]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Periodic Report, and G2 Periodic Report, 17-21 June 1944; HQ, 165th Infantry, FORAGER Operational Report, S3 Operational Report, 5 October 1944; HQ, NTLF, G3 Periodic Report, 18-21 June 1944.

[27]Thomas B. Buell, The Quiet Warrior, (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1974), pp.274-275.

[28]HQ, 27th Division, Field Orders #42, 44, and 45, dated 18 June, 20, and 21 June respectively.

[29]HQ, NTLF, no.8, 22 June 1944.

[30]HQ, 27th Division, Field Order #45A, 21 June 1944.

[31]G3 Periodic Report, no.6, HQ 27th Division, 22 June 1944 and G3 Journal, HQ 27th Division, 22 June 1944, p.37, serial #11.

[32]LTC John Lemp, Observer Report on the Marianas Operation, AGF, 11 July 1944, pp.14-15.

[33]G1 Report, annex L, no.6.

[34]G3 Periodic Report, HQ NTLF, 23 June 1944, p.1 and G3 Journal, HQ 27th Division, 22 June 1944, p.40, serial #54.

[35]HQ, 106th Infantry Regiment, Narrative Report, 15 April - 5 August 1944, p.6.

[36]Crowl, The Campaign in the Marianas, pp.173-174.

[37]HQ, 27th Division, Field Order #46, 22 June 1944 and HQ, NTLF, G3 Periodic Report, no.9, 23 June 1944, p.2.

[38]HQ, 27th Division, Field Order #46, 22 June 1944.

[39]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 23 June 1943, serial #164.

[40]HQ, 27th Division, Field Order #46, 22 June 1944; HQ, NTLF, G3 Periodic Report, no.9, 23 June 1944, p.2.

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[41]G3 Journal, HQ 27th Division, 23 June 1944, serials #53, 56, 65, 76, 101, 106, 132, 152, 153, and 166; HQ, 106th Infantry, Narrative Report, 15 Apr - 5 August 1944, pp.4-5; Lemp, "Report", pp.15-16.

[42]HQ, NTLF, G3 Periodic Report, 22-29 June 1944; HQ, 27th Division, G3 Periodic Report, 22-29 June 1944; HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 22-29 June 1944; HQ, 106th Infantry, Narrative Report, 15 Apr-5 August 1944; HQ, 165th Infantry, Operational Report, S3 Operational Report, 5 October 1944.

[43]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 22 June-27 June 1944.

[44]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 28 June 1944, serial #11, 28, 29, 33, 51, 52; HQ, 27th Division, G3 Periodic Report, no.12, 28 June 1944; HQ, NTLF, G3 Periodic Report, no.14, 28 June 1944; HQ, 106th Infantry, Narrative Report, 15 Apr-5 August 1944, p.13.

[45]HQ, NTLF, G3 Periodic Report, 27-29 June 1944; HQ, 27 Division, G3 Periodic Report, 27-29 June 1944; NTLF Operations Orders #14-44, 15-55, and 16-44.

[46]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 24 June 1944, serial #107, 108, 114; HQ, 27th Division, Field Order #48.

[47]Smith, Coral and Brass, p.175.

[48]Buell, The Quiet Warrior, pp.286-287.

[49]Register of Graduates and Former Cadets of the USMA, Association of Graduates, West Point, New York, 1979, p.314.

[50]Love, The History of the 27th Division, pp. 652-670.

[51]HQ, 106th Infantry, Narrative Report, 15 Apr - 5 August 1944, p.9.

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[53]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 27 and 28 June, 1944.

[54]The Adjutant General's Office, Official Army Register (Wash., DC: US GPO, 1 Jan 1944).

[55]HQ, 27th Division, Field Message #2, 29 June 1944.

[56]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 1 July 1944, serial #8, 11, 17, 20, 33, 65, 66.

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[57]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 4 July 1944, serial #84 and 5 July serial #18, 30, 70; HQ, 27th Division, Field Order #54, 4 July 1944; and HQ, NTLF, G3 Periodic Report, no.21, 5 July 1944.

[58]HQ, 27th Division, G3 Periodic Report, 7 July 1944.

[59]HQ, NTLF, G3 Periodic Report, no.22, 6 July 1944 and HQ, 27th Division, G3 Periodic Report, 6 July 1944.

[60]HQ, NTLF, G3 Periodic Report, no.22, 6 July 1944; HQ, 27th Division, Field Message #6, 5 July 1944; HQ, 27th Division, G3 Journal, 6 July 1944 serials #36 and 45 and 7 July 1944 serials #4, 6, 7, 8, 26, 41, 50, 51, 61, 63, 74, 75, 79, 83, 92; HQ, 106th Infantry, Narrative Report, 15 April - 5 August 1944, p.22.

[61]G3 Periodic Report, no.22, 6 July 1944, HQ NTLF; Field Message #6, HQ 27th Division, 5 July 1944; G3 Journal, HQ 27th Division, 6 July 1944, serials #36, 45 and 7 July 1944 serials #4, 6, 7, 8, 26, 41, 50, 51, 61, 63, 74, 75, 79, 83, 92; G3 Periodic Report, no.20, HQ 27th Division, 6 July 1944; G3 Periodic Report, no.22, HQ 27th Division, 8 July 1944; HQ, 106th Infantry, Narrative Report, 15 Apr - 5 August 1944, p.22.

[62]Love, History of the 27th Division, pp.453-454.

[63]Allan R. Millett, Semper Fidelis: The History of the USMC (NY: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1980), p.403.

[64]Smith, Coral and Brass, p.146.

[65]Major Watts, "Report of the Canadian Officers attached to the 27th Division for the Saipan Operation", 24 August 1944, p.13.

[66]Ibid., p.15.

[67]Ibid., p.17.

[68]Ibid., p.18.

[69]HQ, 106th Infantry Regiment, "FORAGER Comments", 29 May-6 Aug 1944, undtd, p.42; HQ, 23rd Regimental Combat Team, Special Action Report Saipan, pp.52-54; HQ, 4th Marine Division, Operations Report Saipan, 15 June-9 July 1944, 3 October 1944, p.27 and 29.

[70]Lemp, Report on the Marianas Operation, p.19.

[71]Luvaas, Jay, "Buna: 19 November 1942-2 January 1943 A Leavenworth Nightmare", p.222 in America's First Battles, ed. Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1986).

CHAPTER 6

OKINAWA

The Allies, through the Autumn of 1944 continued to make inroads against the Japanese held islands of the Central and Southwest Pacific. General Douglas MacArthur had conducted offensive operations on the Solomons and New Guinea while Admiral Nimitz had attacked and seized the Gilberts, Marshalls, and Marianas. The ultimate goal for these converging pincers was Japan.

For MacArthur the next logical step would be the invasion of the Philippines. Once a foothold was gained then Operation CAUSEWAY, the invasion of Formosa and the China coast, could be initiated from there and the Marianas. MacArthur was ordered to move up his invasion of the Philippines from December to October 1944 and to bypass Mindanao and strike Leyte. The Commander-in-Chief Pacific Ocean Areas, LTG Robert C. Richardson, advised Washington that the prudent decision would be to next invade Luzon and

the Bonin Islands and use then as the jumping off point for an invasion of Okinawa. Okinawa then could be used as the principal staging base for an invasion of the Japanese homeland. Okinawa provided for a safe anchorage for transports and combat ships as well as extensive airfields capable of supporting the largest bombers.

MacArthur added his support to the invasion of Luzon and subsequent invasion of Okinawa as an alternative to Formosa. LTG Harmon, Commander of the Army Air Forces in this area, concurred. LTG Buckner, Commanding General, 10th Army, stated that there were insufficient service troops to support the invasion of Formosa and if Luzon was taken there would be no need.

The decision makers in Washington agreed and tabled CAUSEWAY. MacArthur was ordered to invade Luzon in December and Nimitz to invade the Bonins in January 1945. These two island masses would enable the Allies to keep up the pressure on Japan and attrit their forces. The primary reason for invading Okinawa would be to establish a staging area for the invasion of Japan and to cut the lines of communications between Japan and mainland China and the remaining island strongholds.

The plan for the seizure of Okinawa was simple and straight forward. The 10th Army would move under the operational control of the 5th Fleet commander, Admiral Raymond Spruance, command all ground forces and land on the

western shore of Okinawa. The landing would occur on 1 April 1945 and would be supported by the naval surface and air arms of the 5th Fleet. XXIV Corps would land to the right and III Amphibious Corps, under MG Roy Geiger, USMC, would land to the left. Each of the two assaulting corps had two divisions, of their own service, and 10th Army had two divisions in floating reserve, the 27th and 77th Infantry Divisions.

The mission of 10th Army was to rapidly eliminate enemy resistance and rehabilitate the existing airfields for use against the Japanese homeland. To execute this, III Amphibious Corps would attack across he island and then north while XXIV Corps would turn to the south.[1]

Following the cessation of organized hostilities on Saipan, August 1944, the 27th Division embarked for their rest and retraining Base at Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides Islands. It would take almost two months for the division to close with all units on Espiritu Santo and complete their base camp. The 27th was located in a coconut grove, rife with malaria, and no facilities. The division engineers planned and supervised construction while the rifleman, gunners, and logisticians all did the actual building. Aside from billets for all soldiers the division was compelled to build training areas and facilities from nothing. Known distance and transition ranges for rifles and machine guns, and a 1,000 inch moving target, anti-tank range

were constructed. Impact areas were designated and cleared for mortars and artillery. Due to the immensity of the task to build a base camp the division was unable to commence training until 23 October 1944.[2]

From then until 30 January 1945 the 27th underwent an intensive training program designed to overcome the deficiencies of the FORAGER Operation and to prepare for future missions. The training was organized into four phases: the first was a four week individual soldier reinforcement of basic combat training; the second was nine weeks in duration and dealt with squad and platoon tasks; the third phase was two weeks long and consisted of company and battalion level training; the fourth and last phase was of two weeks and centered upon the Battalion Landing Team including amphibious assaults.[3]

The individual training phase concentrated on patrolling, marksmanship, compass work, and swimming. All soldiers fired a qualification and transition course with his individual weapon and a familiarization course with all other weapons organic to his unit.

The small unit phase centered upon scouting and patrolling, infantry-artillery-tank coordination, and the integration of bazookas, smoke, machineguns, and mortars into the battle. During this phase all individuals attended the Unit Jungle Training Course for eight days.

The company and battalion phase emphasized exploiting enemy weaknesses and coordinating supporting fires. The Commanding General conducted a series of twelve conferences to discuss Combat Principles and imperatives. All infantry and engineer companies engaged in combined tank-infantry exercises designed to stimulate habitual working relationships that were found so wanting on Saipan and Makin.

This training program culminated in three large battalion size exercises in which service ammunition was used to include overhead fire. The first exercise was a night occupation of a defensive position followed by a daylight attack the following morning. The second was the hasty defense of a battalion front. The third exercise was a river crossing without engineer assistance, followed by a defense of the bridgehead, and then a daylight attack integrating tanks, infantry, and artillery.[4]

During these battalion training exercises the regimental command posts were set up but did not practise their art. This was a critical omission as the functioning of the regimental headquarters at Saipan was a noticeable shortcoming. Rather, these command posts were limited in their operational training to two division directed command post exercises, one in December and the other in January. The emphasis was on setting up, moving, and defending the command posts. All equipment was checked for accountability

and serviceability and communications equipment was operationally inspected.[5]

The division loaded out from 20 to 25 March and rehearsed the ship to shore movement in the vicinity of Espiritu Santo. On 25 March the transport squadron embarked for Ulithi, the division's sole stop, which they reached on 3 April. During this leg of the journey the soldiers were given an orientation on the mission and daily discussions were held to include map studies. All available information was disseminated and operations plans published. Just as was the case en route to Saipan there was no deck space for physical training and the soldiers arrived in a pitiable state. The soldiers contented themselves with care and cleaning of their weapons and personal equipment. Education and information officers were designated within each unit to disseminate information about the war in other theaters The division departed Ulithi on 4 April and arrived off the coast of Okinawa on 9 April.[6]

After Saipan the division was short 117 officers and 2508 enlisted men. Between 1 January and 25 March 1945 it received 101 officers and 2692 enlisted men. Despite this influx of new personnel the division sailed with a shortage of 143 officers and 1825 enlisted men. This deficit is only partially justified by an increase in the number of personnel given furloughs, entering the hospital, and staying behind as the rear detachment.[7]

The 27th Division that sailed for Okinawa was vastly different from the one that fought through Saipan. Brigadier General Ogden J. Ross, the Assistant Division Commander and a member of the New York National Guard since 1910, was tasked to command the garrison at Kwajalein. He was replaced by Regular Army Brigadier General William B. Bradford. A veteran of 29 years in the Army, the 49 year old Bradford was a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, the Ecole d' Application de Cavalerie, and the Command and General Staff School. General Bradford had most recently served with the 25th Infantry Division. To fill the vital Chief of Staff position, MG Griner brought in Colonel Richard P. Ovenshine who had been serving as the Chief of Staff of the 98th Division in Hawaii. The 46 year old Ovenshine was a 1918 graduate of the USMA, the only two year course for graduation in that institution's illustrious history. The 105th Infantry's commander, Colonel Leonard Bishop, a New York Guardsman since 1916, was compelled to retire due to disability. He was replaced by Regular Army Colonel Walter S. Winn, Jr. a classmate of Colonel Ovenshine at the Military Academy. The division's DIVARTY commander, Brigadier General Redmond Kernan also was retired due to physical disability. His replacement, Colonel Charles Ferrin, had most recently served as the garrison commander on Makin. The commanders of the 106th and 165th Infantry remained the same, Colonels Albert K. Stebbins and Gerard Kelley, respectively.■

All of the infantry regiments lost battalion commanders either at Saipan or as a result of that action. The 105th lost LTC William J. O'Brien, KIA, and LTC Edward T. Bradt to deafness which precluded his continuance in command. The 106th lost 3rd Battalion commander LTC Harold I. Mizony. The 165th lost Major Martin Foery when he was compelled to return to the States due to a serious injury in the family. In addition, the 105th lost their executive officer LTC Leslie M. Jensen to physical disability. With Major Edward McCarthy moving up to the division staff the 105th was left with no original battalion commander. The new commanders were: LTC Rayburn H. Miller, 41 years old and a member of the Pennsylvania National Guard since 1922. He had graduated from the Command and General Staff School in 1942; Major Holeman Grigsby; and LTC Charles DeGroff, 39 years old and a New York Guardsman since 1928. There was only one new battalion commander in the 106th, LTC David R. Crocker, a 29 year old West Pointer who was charged with bringing the Saipan-devastated 3rd Battalion back to life. The 165th retained the same battalion commanders with whom they began the Saipan campaign."

The division staff remained the same with LTC Frederic Sheldon as the G3, LTC William Van Antwerp as the G2, and LTC Charles B. Ferris as the G4. In reviewing the senior positions from the commanding general through the division staff to the battalion commanders, the ratio of Regular Army

to National Guard officers was 1:2. The CG, ADC, Chief of Staff, two regimental commanders and one battalion commander were RA; the G2, G3, G4, one regimental commander, and eight battalion commanders were National Guard. Only seven of the 36 infantry company commanders who went into action on Okinawa can be positively identified as National Guard. The remainder were either Organized Reserve or RA.[10]

The American 10th Army landed on the west coast of Okinawa on 1 April 1945 with four divisions in the assault wave: 1st and 6th Marine Divisions and 7th and 96th Infantry Divisions. The 77th Infantry Division was programmed to assault Ie Shima and Kerama Retto while the 27th was scheduled to be the garrison force on Okinawa. The Marines turned to the north and advanced against meager opposition. The 7th and 96th, elements of XXIV Corps, turned south and fought through a series of interconnected Japanese strongpoints.

Okinawa was a rugged coral-limestone mass, heavily wooded in the uplands and terraced along the coastal flats. The ridgelines were not continuous and appeared to rise up abruptly with steep faces. The ridge pattern was east-west, providing for natural lines of defense. There were no elevation greater than 600 feet however the major hill masses which are that high have generally steep slopes making them appear higher. Natural caves and tunnels abounded because of the coral-limestone nature of the stratum. Drainage was very

poor resulting in a quagmire when it rains.[11]

The expected strength of the enemy on Okinawa was 98,000-100,000. The major tactical units were the 24th Division, 62nd Division, and the 44th Independent Mixed Brigade.[12] The typical enemy position was strengthened with concrete and had a protective minefield. Mortars, artillery, tanks, machineguns, and rifle fire were all integrated and registered on the natural avenues of approach. Any commanding elevation was likely to be honeycombed with caves and tunnels. Ammunition and food was stored to make each complex self-sufficient. For the first time in the Pacific the Americans were facing an enemy with heavy artillery which had been registered to fire anywhere on the island within the Shuri Line. Each American attack quickly evolved into a small unit action characterized by individual soldiers low crawling through the enemy's wire and mines to lob grenades into their fighting positions.[13] To overcome the enemy's intricate system of defenses the Americans developed what the Japanese called "straddle attack" tactics. This assault was a well coordinated infantry-engineer attack under the direct fire of tanks, self-propelled guns, and flamethrowers. This assault always ended up with hand-to-hand fighting, including bayonets, grenades, and knives, into which the enemy invariably, and indiscriminately placed mortar fire. The infantry-engineer teams would attempt to seal the caves and tunnels from whence

the enemy came with demolitions. Because there were often more than one entrance the practise of reorganization and rapidly consolidating on the objective area was necessary and vital. [14]

The XXIV Corps offensive ran headlong into the Japanese main defensive line in the vicinity of Shuri castle. This fortified position was called the Shuri Line. The Americans reached this defensive network on 8 April but their momentum was spent. The Corps would fight continuously against the depth of this defensive network until 24 April.

The 27th Division, minus the 105th Infantry, was assigned to XXIV Corps to help break the deadlock. The 105th was assigned the mission of assaulting and defeating the enemy on Tsugen Shima, an island off the west coast of Okinawa. The 3rd Battalion alone landed to reduce enemy resistance with the remainder of the regiment held aboard ship as the reserve. It advanced from the landing on the south shore to the northern end of the island, bypassing pockets of resistance to be eliminated the following day. By 1530, 11 April, all resistance on Tsugen Shima had ended with 234 enemy killed. The 3rd Bn, 105th had suffered 11 KIA, 80 WIA, and 3 MIA. The battalion reembarked at 1830 hours and rejoined the regiment on another nearby island, Kerama Retto.[15]

The remainder of the division had begun landing on 9 April and had encountered obstacles at every turn.

Unfavorable surf conditions inhibited the landing to the point where no supplies were able to get ashore. The 165th was able to land on the 10th and relieved the 17th Infantry Regiment, 7th Division, in defense of the Corps Service Area. The 106th landed on the 11th and was attached to the 96th Division as it's reserve.[16] XXIV Corps, by the time the 27th landed, had complete air superiority and could call for close air support at any time of the day. In addition to this was the continuous availability of naval gunfire from battleships, cruiser, and destroyers.

The 105th Infantry was the Corps reserve on 12 and 13 April. Surf conditions continued to disrupt the flow of vital supplies to shore. XXIV Corps issued a warning order to the 27th to prepare to be inserted into the line alongside the 96th on the Corps' right flank.

The 165th was relieved of it's responsibility to defend the Corps Service Area on 15 April. On this same day the 27th assumed responsibility of the Corps right flank with the 2nd Bn, 106th. The division was prepared to participate in a Corps offensive as of this date although it was 2,000 men understrength.[17] On 16 April the 105th Infantry relieved the 382nd Infantry. The division front had the 2nd Bn, 106th on the right and the 105th on the left. All units prepared defenses and conducted active patrolling. The division suffered nine killed and 55 wounded.[18]

On 17 April the front line had the 106th on the right and the 105th on the left with the 165th in reserve. All units continued to improve their defenses while actively patrolling their front. There were three killed and 17 wounded on the day.[19]

The division prepared for XXIV Corps' general offensive on 18 April. The 2nd Bn, 106th conducted a night river crossing with engineer assault boats and secured the town of Machinato. This was the key to a successful assault being conducted on the 19th by the 106th and 105th Infantry Regiments.[20] At 0730 hours the division attacked, as part of the Corps attack with three divisions on line. XXIV Corps had 27 battalions of artillery fire, the most intensive preparation in the Pacific.[21] The attack of the 106th and 105th made moderate gains against heavy Japanese resistance. Enemy anti-tank fire and satchel charges crippled 22 of 30 tanks in the supporting tank battalion. The division had 17 killed and 242 wounded while claiming 188 enemy killed.[22]

The characteristic Japanese defense on the Shuri Line was any elevation covered with foxholes, anti-tank emplacements, machinegun positions, and caves all with cleared fields of fire. The beaten zones of their weapons interlocked at maximum range with mortars and artillery registered on the dead zones. The fighting positions themselves were connected by an intricate series of tunnels which were reinforced to withstand the punishment of

artillery and aerial bombardment. The Japanese maintained relative mobility by using the tunnels to mass maneuver forces at the critical point and time.

The Corps continued the attack on 20 April and the 27th participated with the 165th now on the extreme right, the 106th in the center, and the 105th on the left. The 2nd Bn, 106th was in division reserve. The 106th and 165th made gains of up to 1,000 yards against numerous strongpoints. The 105th encountered heavy resistance and was counterattacked by the tenacious Japanese. They also incurred heavy enemy artillery which completely disrupted the attack of the 2nd Bn, killing or wounding most of the line officers. The division had 32 killed and 401 wounded on the day.[23]

Fighting on 21 April at the Shuri Line was characterized by stubborn enemy resistance and high casualties. All three regiments of the division had attacked on line at 0630 hours and were by intense small arms, mortar, and artillery fire. The 3rd Bn, 106th was relieved by the 2nd Bn, of that regiment and became the division reserve. There were 43 killed and 192 wounded on the day.[24]

The enemy counterattacked during the early morning hours of 22 April with heavy artillery fire and maneuver forces. The 27th reportedly killed 200 Japanese. For the remainder of the day the three regiments conducted limited operations to reduce the enemy to their front. The 2nd Bn,

105th was pulled back to reorganize. TF Bradford, 3rd Bn, 106th and 3rd Bn, 381st (96th Division), was organized by the Commanding General, XXIV Corps to reduce the resistance in Kakazu, a vital enemy strongpoint that was holding up the entire Corps' advance. The 2nd Bn, 165th was attached to the 105th to help close the gap between the 27th and the 96th Divisions. The 102nd Engineer Battalion, under LTC Harold Gormsen a veteran of the First World War and the New York Guard since 1920, was brought forward as the division reserve. Resupply continued to be a nightmare because of the large number of enemy which had been bypassed. The 165th was being supplied almost entirely by sea via Alligators. The 106th was receiving the preponderance of their supply from air drops.[23]

The 10th Army had received replacements in large blocks to make-up the huge deficit in fighting men that this battle was developing. On 13 April it received 1,200 which were evenly distributed among the 7th and 96th Divisions. On 23 April it got 3,000 of which approximately one-third went to the 27th Division.[24]

Neither the 27th nor the 96th Divisions were able to gain ground in their respective sectors due to an intense concentration of enemy on a hogback ridge called Kakazu. The inability of their divisions to progress led to great frustration for the two commanders, MG Griner and MG James Bradley. MG Hodge, the XXIV Corps commander eventually had

to intercede to ensure proper cooperation to reach an end to the stalemate. On 23 April, Hodge organized an ad hoc force under BG Bradford. He was given the 2nd Bn, 165th, 3rd Bn, 17th (7th Division), and detachments of the 193rd and 763rd Tank Battalions, to add to his other two battalions for the reduction of the strongpoint at Kakazu. In the remainder of the division sector all three regiments continued to patrol and eliminate small pockets of resistance. The division lost 32 killed and 121 wounded.[27]

TF Bradford advanced after a 13 minute artillery preparation with 2nd Bn, 165th on the right, 3rd Bn, 17th in the center, and 3rd Bn, 381st on the left. They moved through the town and onto the dominating ridge to the south against moderate resistance. The 105th and 106th advanced along with TF Bradford. The 165th met strong resistance from an intricate defensive network which friendly tanks couldn't penetrate. There were only seven killed and 106 wounded on 24 April. The Japanese had conducted a general withdrawal from the Shuri Line on 23 and 24 April to predetermined defensive positions to the south.[28]

The 106th and 105th continued to improve their positions on 25 April prior to resuming the offensive on the following day. The 165th attacked again to reduce the strongpoint in the center of their front. Their effort was not, however, coordinated and resulted in a series of company-sized attacks which the enemy was able to stop. LTC

Dennis Claire, 36 year old commander of the 2nd Battalion and a veteran of the Guard since 1928, was relieved prior to this attack as he demurred when Colonel Kelley ordered the assault. Claire's position was that proper preparation had not been made and that this assault was futile under the circumstances. The 2nd Bn had been attacking this particular piece of terrain for three days without success and now it was being ordered to attack with no change in the conditions. In other words neither regiment nor division materially effected the situation to enable the battalion to attack with any greater probability of success. Claire was replaced with another long-time Guardsman, Major Herman Lutz, a member since 1922. The regiment achieved only limited success and that by individual companies though they paid a high price in casualties. The 27th incurred a loss of 16 killed and 119 wounded.[29]

On 26 April the division resumed the attack with all three regiments on line. The 105th, on the left, advanced steadily against moderate resistance. The 106th encountered negligible enemy but held their advance to maintain contact with the regiments on their right and left. The 165th fought through the heaviest resistance of the day meeting numerous pillboxes and Japanese filled caves. Naval gunfire was used extensively and effectively. Two companies of the reserve 3rd Bn, 106th were inserted into the 105th's line to

strengthen it. All of the regiments were understrength and stretched thin. There were 29 killed and 164 wounded on 26 April.[30]

The 165th attacked on 27 April and made moderate gains against stiff enemy resistance. Through heavy rifle, machinegun, and artillery fire, the regiment secured the northern third of Machinato Airfield. Despite the limited success, Colonel Kelley was relieved by MG Griner and replaced with LTC Joseph T. Hart. The 165th had been fighting a wholly uncoordinated action since coming ashore. The regiment, for the two weeks that they had been in the line, had been managing companies rather than battalions. As a result they had neglected their own responsibility of setting the conditions for the battle and then permitting their battalions the flexibility to use their initiative to accomplish the particular mission. Colonel Kelley and his staff failed to understand their role and thus micro-managed a fight that realistically belonged to the battalions.[31] The 106th mopped up and patrolled during the day. The 105th consolidated their position and eliminated caves with demolitions. The division suffered 26 killed and 128 wounded on the day.[32]

The division continued the attack on 28 April with the 165th securing the whole of Machinato Airfield. The enemy they had encountered were reduced through a coordinated tank and self-propelled gun attack with infantry following up.

The 106th continued to meet only minimal resistance and, therefore, their primary function was maintaining contact with the flank regiments. The 105th made a moderate advance against light opposition. The 27th had 29 killed and 184 wounded on this day.[33]

The division attacked on 29 April and made significant gains in the 165th's sector. The 106th met heavy resistance but pushed through and maintained contact with the 165th. The 105th made small gains against intense enemy resistance. The division made preparations to be relieved by the 1st Marine Division. The 27th suffered 27 killed and 164 wounded in action.[34]

The division attacked, on 30 April, with the 165th on the right against moderate opposition. That regiment had significant success. The 106th and 105th improved their positions and continued to patrol to the front. The 165th was relieved late in the day by the 1st Marines. The division had 20 killed and 67 wounded on the day.[35] The 96th Division was relieved by the 77th Division. They had suffered 688 killed, 2,968 wounded, and 1,087 non-battle casualties in 30 days fighting.[36]

On 1 May the division was relieved by the 1st Marine Division. Of the three Army divisions in the line the 27th had the least combat power due to increasing casualties. The 27th was also programmed to garrison Okinawa after it's capture and, therefore, was taken out of the line to permit

some build up of combat power.[37] The 27th DIVARTY, minus the 249th FA Bn, was attached to the Marines. The 27th moved to the northern end of the island to eliminate remaining pockets of resistance. On the day the division lost 27 killed and 5 wounded.[38]

The division was in action from 19 April until 1 May a total of twelve days. In that time it advanced 4,200 yards, killed 5,006 enemy, and took 13 prisoners. The division suffered 672 killed and 2,547 wounded. In addition it incurred 781 non-battle casualties.[39] By comparison, during this same timeframe, the 7th Infantry Division on the far left of the Corps' sector incurred 223 killed, 1,284 wounded, and 670 non-battle casualties. The 96th Division, in the center of the Corps' sector, suffered 238 killed, 1,215 wounded, and 234 non-battle casualties.[40]

The fighting on Okinawa was very much similar to that which the 27th had experienced on Saipan. The training routine which they had endured on Espiritu Santo was designed to correct the identified deficiencies from that last campaign. That the division didn't achieve great success upon landing on Okinawa was more of a tribute to the tenacity of the Japanese fighting men than to the ineptness of the 27th Infantry Division. None of the American units: 7th, 77th, 96th Infantry Divisions, 1st and 6th Marine Divisions, were able to blithely overcome the Shuri Line and it's successors.

The shortcomings of the division could be found in the functioning of the headquarters at regimental and division level. The fighting performance of the individual soldier through company level could not be faulted. The commanders and staffs above them were unable to orchestrate the fighting to take full advantage of their soldier's heroism and determination.

From 2 May until 30 June 1945 the 27th mopped up the northern half of the island. There were countless enemy caves and fighting positions uncovered and still hundreds of Japanese willing to resist. The division fought several pitched battles against well organized company sized units. In the end the 27th had killed 507 enemy soldiers, captured 118 and interned 34,739 civilians.[41] The division remained on Okinawa until late August, after the war with Japan had ended, and then moved to Japan for occupation duty.

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[1]HQ, XXIV Corps After Action Report, 1 Apr-30 June 1945, p.1.

[2]HQ, 27th Division, "Operation Report Nansei Shoto Phase I", 16 July 1945, p.18.

[3]Ibid., p.18.

[4]Ibid., pp.18-20.

[5]Ibid., pp.20-21.

[6]Ibid., p.21.

[7]Ibid., p.10.

[8]Official National Guard Register for 1943, (Wash., DC: US GPO, 1943) and Edmund G. Love, The 27th Infantry Division in World War II (Wash., DC: Infantry Journal Press, 1949), p.520.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Official National Guard Register for 1943 (Wash., DC: US GPO, 1943)

[11]HQ, XXIV Corps, After Action Report, 1 Apr-30 June 1945, p.103.

[12]Ibid., p.118.

[13]HQ, 27th Division, "Operation Report Nansei Shoto Phase I", 16 July 1945, pp.80-81.

[14]HQ, XXIV Corps, After Action Report, 1 Apr-30 June 1945, p.58.

[15]HQ, 27th Division, "Operation Report Nansei Shoto Phase I", 16 July 1945, pp.29-30.

[16]Ibid., pp.30-31.

[17]HQ, XXIV Corps, After Action Report, 1 Apr-30 June 1945, p.26.

[18]HQ, 27th Division, "Operation Report Nansei Shoto Phase I",16 July 1945, pp.34-35.

[19]Ibid., p.36.

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[20]Ibid., p.37.

[21]HQ, XXIV Corps, After Action Report, 1 Apr-30 June1945, p.27.

[22]HQ, 27th Division, "Operation Report Nansei Shoto Phase I", 16 July 1945, p.38.

[23]HQ, 27th Division, "Operation Report Nansei Shoto Phase I", p.39.

[24]Ibid., p.40.

[25]Ibid., p.41.

[26]HQ, XXIV Corps, After Action Report, 1 Apr-30 June 1945, pp.100-101.

[27]Ibid., p.42.

[28]Ibid., p.43.

[29]Ibid., p.44.

[30]Ibid., p.45.

[31]Love, The History of the 27th in WW II, p.612.

[32]HQ, 27th Division, "Operation Report Nansei Shoto Phase I", 16 July 1945, p.46.

[33]Ibid., p.47.

[34]Ibid., p.48.

[35]Ibid., p.49.

[36]HQ, XXIV Corps, G3 Reports, no.30, 30 April 1945, pp.3-4.

[37]HQ, XXIV Corps, After Action Report, 1 April-30 June 1945, p.28.

[38]HQ, 27th Division, "Operation Report Nansei Shoto Phase I", 16 July 1945, p.50.

[39]Ibid., pp.95-96.

[40]HQ, XXIV Corps, After Action Report, 1 Apr-30 June 1945

[41]Ibid., pp.51-55.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

The 27th Division participated in four operations in the Central Pacific in World War II: the invasions of Makin, Eniwetok, Saipan, and Okinawa. In all cases the missions assigned to the division were accomplished, yet it's performance was colored by the writing of TIME reporter Robert Sherrod who had inaccurately depicted the situation and events surrounding the relief of MG Smith at Saipan in 1944 and by General Holland Smith in his autobiography, Coral and Brass. Sherrod stated that it was the performance of the 27th Division that caused MG Smith's relief in that the men refused to fight and froze in their foxholes. The writings of Sherrod and H.M. Smith were inferences and not first hand accounts.

There are two parameters which could be used to measure how well the division performed each of the assigned task: time required to accomplish the mission and

casualties. The longer the time used, the greater the inefficiency and the higher the number of casualties, the lower the overall efficacy of that unit.

At Makin, the division (165th Regimental Combat Team) eliminated enemy resistance in three days. V Amphibious Corps had planned for a one-day operation with the RCT then becoming a reserve force available for Tarawa. Corps made some fundamental planning errors which led to their unrealistic timetable. First, it underestimated the enemy as he had reinforced Makin and had been preparing defensive positions for 10 months prior to the invasion. Second, it overestimated the value of the pre-invasion Naval bombardment. And third, it assumed that the Army executed amphibious warfare exactly as the Marine Corps, i.e., rapid build-up of combat power on the beaches and then fast penetrations inland, bypassing enemy strongpoints.

Corps' timetable was unrealistic and unworkable. The 165th RCT adhered to Army doctrine as they been trained and accomplished the mission with minimal casualties. From the standpoint of the V Amphibious Corps (H.M. Smith), the reduction of Makin took too long and wouldn't permit the use of the 165th on Tarawa. This is another shortcoming of the Corps staff as they assumed that the 165th would be available for use on Tarawa instead of programming another RCT, such as the division's 106th which wasn't committed.

On Saipan the division was initially programmed to be the Corps reserve and was then committed on the most difficult terrain as the main effort. Holland M. Smith had said that the he had serious reservations about the 27th yet he used them in the most difficult sector where the enemy was thickest. When the 27th couldn't maintain the pace of advance of the adjacent Marine Divisions Smith did nothing to aid them. He didn't reduce their sector or increase their combat power with artillery, tanks, or more infantry, instead he reduced their force and disrupted their chain of command. Smith and the staff of the NTF had been on Saipan but had no appreciation for the terrain as they continually attacked with three divisions abreast with no attempt to maneuver around the strength of the enemy. The individual soldiers of the division demonstrated the ability to perform as they had trained and they fought courageously. The soldiers of the 27th Division proved that they would fight and lacked only reasonably logical tactical employment considerations from Corps.

The 27th was again the floating reserve for Operation ICEBERG, the invasion of Okinawa. The division was almost 2,000 men understrength with many new faces among the senior leadership. Once again using time and casualties as the measure of success the division met and exceeded all expectations. Inserted into the line to place greater pressure on the defending enemy the division made gains which

equalled those of the adjacent 96th and 7th Divisions. The lack of quick success on Okinawa by 10th Army should have caused the initiation of a radically differrent tactical approach to reduce enemy resistance. Instead, General Buckner attacked repeatedly into the strength of the Japanese Shuri Line in an operation reminiscent of World War I.

The division's operation on Okinawa was a series of company-sized engagements which reflected a hands-off approach by the higher echelons. Division, regiment, and in most cases battalion, controlled the action from too far in the rear with no appreciation for the adversity which the companies experienced. On Okinawa, as on Saipan, the individual soldier demonstrated superior fighting ability and intrepidity but the division's senior leadership failed them. The commanders and staffs did not adequately perform their role in setting the conditions for battle which would increase the chance for success.

To examine more closely the performance of the 27th Division,four areas were analyzed: personnel, training, military education, and external influences. The 27th was not unique in it's experiences in these four areas. Aside from it's external influences the 27th could be characterized as typical of all National Guard divisions in the areas of personnel, training, and military education.

All of the National Guard divisions entered active duty at half strength and were plussed up shortly thereafter

with draftees. All through the critical first year of service when the divisions were maturing as units the NCOs were being siphoned off to cadre other emerging divisions and to attend OCS and other schools.

The officers were inexperienced but dedicated. The senior leadership was invariably too old and soon replaced with younger men. In the 27th Division battalion commanders rose from company grade positions while the company grade soon were filled with Organized Reserve Corps officers. The end result of this was as seen at Okinawa with eight of nine battalion commanders but only seven of 36 company commanders coming from the National Guard. At the time the 27th first saw combat in November 1943 there were approximately 3,000 original Guardsmen. Of those the majority had been privates who became NCOs with little or no formal training.

The Guard divisions were systematically broken up to provide experience to other divisions. The recruiting slogan, "Join the Guard and go with the boys you know," was ideal but never realized.[1] The foundation of the militia system was units who lived in close proximity during peacetime, trained together, and then went to war as a cohesive body. It was this cohesion which gave the units heightened fighting power.[2]

Major John S. Brown in his thesis "Winning Teams: Mobilization - Related Correlates of Success In American World War II Infantry Divisions", hypothesized that divisions

which performed well in combat met certain criteria. These criteria were: personnel stability in the twelve months prior to embarkation; previous combat experience; and fighting a first battle which resembled their training exercises. The preponderance of the Guard divisions never met these critieria because of the Army's penchant for disassembling them.[3]

General Marshall, in a speech before the war to the National Rifle Association, highlighted the value of cohesion:

> ...the infantry soldier becomes an isolated individualist, with all of the frailties of the individual magnified a thousand fold. He lacks a physical rallying point--no ship, no heavy gun, no fortification, nothing but a few scattered buddies. Of himself, by himself, he can apparently do very little, though collectively he can win the war.[4]

The National Guard was the embodiment of cohesion. The rifle companies and artillery batteries organized in both small and large communities across the country had developed a level of expertise sufficient for war. They possessed high morale and cohesion, dedicated and extremely patriotic officers and NCOs at battalion and below, and tactical and technical competence at the individual soldier and company-grade echelon. The greatest asset that the Guard had was their tight-knit, very loyal small units which are the foundation of all great units. Yet when broken up, scattered amongst new units made up of draftees, the expertise and efficiency was lost in the older National Guard unit and rarely acquired in the newer

unit. Dr. Robert R. Palmer, writing immediately after the war, stated that the personnel losses were made up by a steady stream of replacements yet the efficiency of the organization suffered irreparably.[5]

Training in the Guard before the war was rudimentary and exemplified the Regular Army. Parades, retreat ceremonies, and spit and polish were the norm, and hard realistic training to prepare for war was unusual. The weekly drills and annual training were only adequate for individual and small unit development. The assistance and guidance provided by the Regular Army to the Guard was completely inadequate. Training upon mobilization was constrained by the lack of experienced NCOs due to their loss to OCS and to cadres. The large maneuver exercises served to train the Army, Corps, and Division staffs but not the fighting elements, i.e., the regiments and below. Training conducted by the 27th Division reflected all of these problems.

The military education of the leadership of the 27th Division in particular and the National Guard in general was inadequate. Service school courses were available to the Guard officers but they weren't always available to take advantage of them. Upon mobilization most of the 27th's battalion commanders and principal staff officers attended the Infantry School's Battalion Commanders and Staff Officer's Course. Too few, however, attended the Command and

General Staff School which was the preeminent course of instruction. Those who had attended received a condensed version of questionable utility. The end products, that is the students who would perform as operations officers in battalions and regiments, were shown to be less than capable. On Saipan, in particular, the operations orders produced by both division and regimental headquarters were incomplete and late. While it is true that the corps operations order arrived much too late to be useful, the division, as a minimum, should have been able to produce sufficient guidance for the regiments so that their detailed order could be developed.

There were a number of external influences which impacted on the performance of the division such as the relationship between the 27th and it's higher headquarters, in most cases, the Marine's V Amphibious Corps. The difference in tactical approach to warfare did not permit a smooth working relationship. The Marine approach was as General H.M. Smith described it in Coral and Brass, "Hit quickly, hit hard, and keep right on hitting. Give the enemy no rest, no opportunity to consolidate his forces and hit back at you."[4] The Army's approach was not radically different but their forces executed this concept in a more methodical manner. This slower, more methodical approach was thought to reduce casualties especially in units with limited training time together. Admiral Raymond Spruance felt that

the Army's methodology actually caused more casualties because it exposed the force to the enemy's attacks and fire for a greater period of time.[7] This was the upshot of the difference of opinion between the Army and the Marine Corps in the Central Pacific.

The 32nd Division (Wisconsin and Michigan National Guard) was the first Guard division to be sent overseas, arriving on New Guinea in 1942. Initially, they were unprepared for the rigor of jungle warfare and suffered countless setbacks. The commanding general, MG Edwin Harding, was relieved and numerous other officers sent to other units. MG Robert Eichelberger took command and within weeks had transformed the division into a fighting unit which had no comparison in the Pacific.[8] The basic units, the squads, platoons, and companies were the same but with different senior leadership after Eichelberger took command. This division performed magnificently once the weak and inefficient leaders were weeded out. The 32nd Division is a tribute to the National Guard and proved that the Guardsmen were capable.

The 27th Division, when it went into combat in November 1943, was not in the same situation as the 32nd. The 32nd embarked for the Southwest Pacific with the majority of the Guardsmen with whom they had mobilized. The 27th had perhaps 20% original Guardsmen and virtually none of the original NCOs. This division had been emasculated in the

three years which lapsed between mobilization and entry into combat. The small unit cohesion which had been fostered over the years before the war was lost as the more experienced and valuable men of the 27th were sent to cadre other divisions or to OCS to be sent to yet another division.

The division that invaded Makin, Saipan, and Okinawa resembled the original 27th only slightly. The division's senior officers who did survive the levies lacked the fundamentals of leadership and military knowledge to overcome the serious training deficiencies of the young, inexperienced soldiers in their care.

Typically, National Guard divisions in World War II were used to train new inductees in the basics of combat and to provide new lieutenants for other divisions. The 27th was levied countless times and kept out of combat for three years before their initiation at Makin. Just as before the war, the Regular Army establishment provided little in the way of guidance or assistance to the division to prepare them in any way for combat.

Essentially, the Regular Army establishment wasted it's most valuable asset, the National Guard. Before the war the training of the Guard was inadequate and after mobilization the personnel policies of the Army permitted it's destruction. It was the protracted build-up time which the Army enjoyed which was it's salvation.

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[1]John K. Mahon, History of the Militia and the National Guard, (NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1983), p.181.

[2]Ibid., p.262.

[3]John S. Brown "Winning Teams: Mobilization - Related Correlates of Success In American WW II Infantry Divisions", Ft Leavenworth, KS, 1985, MMAS Thesis, p.107.

[4]Major H.A. DeWeerd, ed., Selected Speeches and Statements of the General of the Army George C. Marshall, (Wash., DC: The Infantry Journal, 1945), p.14.

[5]Dr. Robert R. Palmer, Mobilization of the Ground Army, (Wash., DC: The Historical Section, Army Ground Forces, 1946), p.2.

[6]Holland M. Smith, Coral and Brass, (NY: Scribners, 1949), p.17.

[7]Thomas B. Buell, The Quiet Warrior, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1974), p.358.

[8]John Francis Shortal, Robert L. Eichelberger: The Evolution of a Combat Commander, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilm International, 1985), p.88.

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